LIFESTYLE / E1 ENTERTAINMENT / H6 NEWS / A2

JOB
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Attack of the killer blog: What it's all about, how the 'Gucci Gang' fits in and why it sucked in 270,000 hits in just 5 days

Aussie blogger Brian Gorrell is also hot topic with show biz folk who say he's so upstaging the Gretchen Barretto telescope of scandals. They're even talking movie version with Ogie Diaz cast as Brian's Pinoy ex- boyfriend

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim's son arrested in buy-bust operation with P600K worth of shabu; father says let him 'suffer' for his action

Fasting not only holy, it's ago-defying healthy

By Rosa R. Salazar

IMAGINE FINDING THE fountain of youth.

As Filipino Catholics prepare for the oldage test fasting during Holy Week, some

PHILIPPINE Sunday
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, March 16, 2008 44 Vol. 22 / No. 102 www.inquirer.net

Palm Sunday starts week close to Pinoys' hearts

By Beverly T. Mendoza

FILIPINOS VALUE HOLY WEEK SO MUCH that they call it "Mahal na Araw" to underline how much they revere the commemoration of Jesus Christ's final moments.

"To call something mahal means it is near your heart. The days embodying are so dear to

Pacquiao by KO, odds say

Betting trend favors RP's Pride over Mexican pug

By Roy Luarca

LAS VEGAS—MANNY PACquiao wants Filipinos to be happy. Juan Manuel Marquez wants to regain Mexican pride.

Those two motives will carry the weight of their respective countries when they dispute the World Boxing Council superfeatherweight crown Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the Events Center of Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino here.

Strictly speaking, Marquez is the champion and Pacquiao the challenger, but billing holds no meaning when the two fighters go on top of the ring for the year's most hyped and most awaited pistic fight.

They will also try to settle an old score that dates back to May 2004, when Marquez escaped with a draw despite being clobbered three times by Pacquiao in the first round. (Other Pacquiao-Marquez stories on Pages A23 and A24.)

Pacquiao says that fight should have gone his way. If not for a scoring error by one of the judges, but Marquez in-

MANNY, A2

PRE-FIGHT BITE. Filipino boxing idol Manny Pacquiao and Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez flex their muscles for photographers after Friday's official weigh-in at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas. Both tipped the scales within the 130-pound limit for Saturday's fight (Sunday morning in Manila).

Balut, polvoron vendor rises to top PMA class '08

ZAMBOANGA CITY—WHEN he was a child, the topnotcher of the Philippine Military Academy's highest (Bagong Hukbo ng Lahi) Class of 2008 had to sell balut (pickled duck egg) and polvoron (a milk candy pastry) to help his family make ends meet.

Indeed, Cadet First Class John "Bonghong" Rallos, 21, proved to be a fighter even in his youth. He braved cold nights to peddle his wares on the streets after daytime classes at the Canelar Elementary Laboratory School here.

Politicians and Boy Rallos' three children had to endure many trials when they were young, said Hazel Rallos, Bonghong's sister and the eldest of the siblings.

"Life was sacrificial for all of us," said Hazel, now 28. "My mother had to fend for our needs, our education, and I was only 13 when Mr all had to work to support our education."

Hazel said their father was diagnosed with leukemia shortly after the family's Balut business failed.

Their father died a few months before Bonghong, the middle child, graduated valedictorian from grade school.

"It was a very emotional occasion because Bonghong dedicated his graduation honors to our father," said Hazel, who herself graduated last week as one of the top 20 students of the Navy school in Zamboanga.

After Mercedes Rallos' death, Mr all and children fared even more hardship.

Hazel said she and her siblings stayed up at night to help their mother pack polvoron and run candy for sale in neighbors, in school and on the streets.

Things took a turn for the worst for the Rallos children when their mother died in 2004.

But despite the setbacks, the siblings went on with their lives and helped each other survive, said Secretary and Honorable Manuel L. Felp Rallos' best friends.

Perseverance and faith in God were among the factors that helped the siblings overcome grief and hardship, Secretary said, adding:

"Bonghong is very humble. He loves to play guitar and watch television. He would rather stay home than join his friends outside."

In 2003, Bonghong graduated magna cum laude from the Western Mindanao State University where he took a physics course.

He taught briefly at Ateneo

BALUT, A2

Academic, movie stars at Read-Along in Miriam College

By Kenneth M. dela Rosa

KEEPING ITS PROMISE OF bringing reading closer to children, the Inquirer partnered with the Miriam College Child Study Center (CSC) for its first ever Read-Along session in a private school.

Last Tuesday, more than 50 students in nursery and kindergarten had stories read to them by no less than the retired president, Patricia Licuanan, and one of the students, 5-year-old Angelo Aquino.

The children, aged 4 or 5 years old, also got a special treat when the Inquirer partnered with the Miriam College Child Study Center (CSC) for its first ever Read-Along session in a private school.

On Monday, radio host Ariel Ureta and award-winning actress Cherry Pie Picache graced the back-to-back Inquirer Read-Along sessions also held at Miriam College-CSC.

Ureta has a child studying at CSC and resident Picache.

For the morning session, Picache read "It's Mine" by Leo Lionni in front of more than 50 nursery students.

Ureta brought in his "Si Boning Bisaksak," a story he wrote specially for the after-

ACADEMIC, A2

Wish come true: Teen helps 'beautiful' old man

A PICTURE-PERFECT FRIENDSHIP. Paulina Regina Miranda raises a photo of Mariano Facey, one of the people who has "made life beautiful" for her. He has been a newspaper dealer for the past 25 years.

By Erika Sauler

NOT ALL TEENAGERS SHOP party and watch "Gossip Girl."

Paulina Regina Miranda, 18, a high school senior at Assumption College, Makati, is an exception. She's the type who would readily share a piece with hungry street children or give up her Hawaiianas flip flops if needed.

In a scene as no surprise when Miranda made a wish, not for herself, but for someone she sees every day and had known since she was a child.

She wished for medical assistance for Mariano Facey or "Nilang Kuwan," a 70-year-old newspaper vendor who was recently hospitalized for severe anemia, and for "some sort of recognition for his hard work."

Miranda is one of 22 Inquirer letter writers chosen to have their wishes granted during the paper's 22nd anniversary last December.

In her letter, Miranda described Nilang Kuwan as "this cute old man who just wants to drink Alaska milk and watch 'Mars Ravelo.'"

The Inquirer granted half of her wish last month when her coaching team about Nilang Kuwan was published in Young Blood.

This month, she was delighted to find out that the Inquirer would provide Nilang Kuwan with some financial assistance.

"Whew! This is happy for him," Miranda said.

Together with her parents, she went with the Inquirer to Nilang Kuwan's residence in Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City

WISH, A2

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Mayor Lim's son busted for drugs

44-yr-old must face consequences, says staunchly anticrime father

WHAT'S INSIDE

- OIL FIRMS raise pump prices anew /A3
- LAWYER TAKES extrajudicial killings to UN /A4
- DOTC, DPWH all set for Holy Week travelers /A9

By Tina Santos, Alcuin Papa and Artyn de la Cruz

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM YESTERDAY said he would not lift a finger to help his son who was arrested in a drug buy-bust operation late Friday in Manila.

He said he would not even send a lawyer to his son, Manny Antonio Lim, 44, a businessman, who was arrested (while) in possession of 500 grams of shabu, or methamphetamine hydrochloride, worth P100,000.

"If he violated the law, let the law fall where it may. I only help those who are victims of injustice. That's what I have been fighting for. The law applies to all. That's my philosophy in life," Lim said in a phone interview.

"He's 44 years old, he should be ready to face the consequences of his actions. Let him suffer for his actions," said the (mother who established) that he said he has not had or been speaking terms for some months.

According to Lim, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Dionisio Santiago had called to inform him that his son had been arrested.

Relentless campaigner

"I told him (Santiago), 'Congratulations to your men,'" said the mayor, a former police official dubbed "Dirty Harry" for his uncompromising stance against crime when he was chief of the National Bureau of Investigation.

During his first stint as mayor of Manila in the 1990s, Lim pursued a relentless campaign against drugs, marking the busting of drug suspects with red paint to shame them. He will be remembered for his mantra at the time: "The law applies to all or none at all."

The mayor said he had no idea that his son was using drugs.

"I don't know anything, what I do know is that he was having family troubles," he said.

The younger Lim was arrested by PDEA operatives after he and his two cohorts tried to sell shabu to a police agent.

Manuel Lim was arrested at around 1:45 p.m. on Friday on Espeleta Street in Sta. Cruz.

He and the two others, identified as Joel Sabado, 33, and Ronald Dimaal, 38, were arrested after they tried to sell 100 grams of shabu for P100,000. The current street price of shabu, seized by the PDEA, is P6,000 a gram.

They were charged with violations of the illegal drugs law, selling drugs is a nonbailable offense that carries a life sentence.

In handcuffs and wearing a dark gray shirt, Manuel Lim said his two companions were brought before an inquest at the Department of Justice yesterday.

He refused to answer questions about the arrest, but when asked if he had called his father, he said: "Yes, I did not harbor. I have to "formally" would arrest and charge me."

Old enough

In a statement, Santiago said the operation was a legitimate drug bust and was completely coordinated with the mayor himself and Manila police authorities.

"This is a legitimate operation without any political motive. We appreciate the all-out support of local officials like Mayor Lim," Santiago said.

He said that Lim told him that his son was "old enough to know the consequences of his actions" and that the suspect should be treated like any other violator.

"Sun do your job," he quoted Lim as telling him.

Santiago added that the arrest of Lim's son should serve as a "stern warning" to all drug offenders that the PDEA would enforce the law "without fear or favor."

Arnold Carreon, PDEA public information officer, said in an interview that Santiago had authorized Lim by phone minutes before the actual buy-bust took place at a dental clinic on Espeleta Street.

At about that time, Lim was spending one against corruption at the Liwasang Bonifacio gazebo nearby.

Santiago said the intensity of the PDEA anti-drugs campaign in Manila was mainly because it was Lim himself who declared Manila an "open city" for PDEA agents.

"Mayor Lim was in fact one of our inspirations in intensifying the anti-illegal drugs campaign in Manila. It's just as sad that, after a rigid casing and intelligence work, the target on the other end happened to be his son, Manuel," he said.

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Another mayor's son arrested

By Marlon Ramos

AFTER THREE YEARS IN hiding, a scion of a Western Samar political clan was arrested in Las Piñas City on Friday for the killing of a man in Quezon City in 2005.

Stephen Gerry Ong, 33, was arrested by QC Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit operatives in his apartment in Moonwalk Subdivision in Las Piñas.

Gerry is the son of incumbent San Jorge (Western Samar) Mayor Nancy Ong who succeeded her husband, Joseph, to the post after last year's elections.

Supt. Franklin Mateo Matamang, QCPD-CIDU chief, said Gerry's arrest was covered by a warrant issued by QC Regional Trial Court Judge Ismael Quisumbing of Branch 93.

Matamang said Gerry was the principal suspect in the killing of 32 Mike Carreguil, who was shot dead in front of a store in Barangay Sta. Monica, QC, on the night of March 6, 2005.

He said Stephen and his two brothers, Francis and Timothy, were also the subject of an arrest warrant in another murder case in Catubig, Samar.

"We're still checking on the circumstances of their pending case in Samar. But we have information it was connected to local politics," Matamang told the reporters.

Records showed Stephen was driving a Honda SUV which bore a "Bicopol" license plate when he stopped at the store and asked Carreguil, who was drinking with friends, about the whereabouts of his (Gerry's) sister.

A witness, Joseph Wapili, said Gerry got irked when he did not like Carreguil's answers.

The suspect reportedly alighted from his vehicle, shot the victim at close range with a .45-caliber pistol and sped off.

Gerry has denied the accusation against him, saying he only drove a specialized unit and did not carry any SUV.

He was positively identified by Wapili, however, through a picture that accompanied the registration of the Honda.

Gerry is detained at the QCPD-CIDU jail in Camp Karingal in Valenzuela, Quezon City.

Senate has enough for NBN report –Kiko

By Dona Z. Pazolanga

NOW IT'S NOT ONLY SOMEBODY senators around that Senate investigation with the long-running Senate inquiry into the allegedly anomalous $329-million National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp.

After conducting 12 televised public hearings that usually lasted well into the night, Senate Majority Leader Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan said the Senate blue ribbon committee should be ready to come out with its report.

"We shouldn't stop there, however. We need to punish the guilty. If we don't, we have no credibility for the rule of law in this country," Pangilinan stressed.

The joint inquiry by the blue ribbon committee and the committees on trade and commerce and on national defense began in September last year.

"I believe we have gathered sufficient findings to craft a preliminary report from the blue ribbon committee," Pangilinan said, adding that the joint committees could already recommend legislation to prevent another anomalous transaction, and recommend the filing of criminal and administrative charges against the government officials involved.

He said the testimonies of witnesses Rodolfo Aranda Jr., former technical assistant to Commerce Secretary Rolando Mer, Undersecretary Jeanne Ann Sony" de Vereda III, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Ramon III, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and even former Commissioner on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. himself "support that Chairman Abalos is involved, that there was a bribe attempt, and that there was a turnaround from the initial proposal of a build-operate-transfer project."

"We do have enough circumstantial evidence to have at least a preliminary report," Pangilinan said.

Palace rules out compromise over Spratlys

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ruled out any compromise with China and other claimant countries over the mineral-rich Spratly Islands in the South China Sea amid China's veiled threat to occupy islets the Philippines.

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said the Arroyo administration could not enter into any "compromise agreement with China "because the decision on who has the right over the questionable territories would be up to the United Nations."

"China has no option but to comply with the UN," he said.

Apostol alluded here that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would not seek to pressure from Beijing and veto the proposed law redefining the baselines of the country's territory, which would leave the Isnds for the country's claims for an extended continental shelf under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

Apostol said the President had no objection if the failed vote on the bill.

"If there would be inaction from the President's side to pass this into law or uncertain to assure it down, she could be impeached. She's going to have a big problem, that's why we are urging Congress to pass this 200-mile exclusive economic zone," said Apostol.

Iron hand

"The President will not back out from this. Instead, she is giving both houses of Congress a free hand even if China has threatened to sever ties because that's not really an option available. We cannot get into a compromise agreement," he said.

The UN has set May 2009 as the deadline for the submission of a country's claims to areas in the WEZ.

But a government official yesterday warned that the House bill seeking to redefine the country's archipelagic baseline wasn't be accepted under international law because the baseline waters is hinds outside the archipelago.

Bottom line

Under House Bill No. 5030, the baselines cover not only the archipelago but even islands not actually possessed by the country, Henry Biscocho said at Bida Hotel press forum in Quezon City.

Biscocho, the secretary general of the Commission on Maritime and Oceanic Affairs Secretariat, said the measure identified at least six base points (sometimes built on islets to mark a state's claim) that the country did not actually possess.

"What's the bottom line of all this? It's a baseline that will leave Philippine being recognized under [our] national law," he said.

The commission is attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"The bill has been passed on second reading, but some lawmakers have demanded its review.

Beijing has expressed displeasure over the bill, specifically the provisions including the Kalayaan Group of Islands, Scarborough Shoal, and the waters off Zambales in the Philippine Sea.

The bill seeks to amend Republic Act No. 3046 and RA 5446, the laws that define the country's maritime borders.

Not included

Biscocho said that under the Unclos, an archipelagic straight baseline should apply to the Philippines, which is composed of an archipelago and other islands.

"Under Unclos, if you're an archipelago, you're allowed to draw straight archipelagic baselines," he said, referring to the method of drawing straight lines on the edges of the archipelago to establish the baseline.

Hence, the archipelagic baseline should not include islands outside of the archipelago, he said.

Regime of island

Islands outside of the archipelago, such as the Kalayaan Group of Islands and Scarborough Shoal, should be delineated through the method of normal baseline under the principle of the "regime of island," Biscocho said.

Under the regime of islands, what does it say? When you own the island, then you also own the waters surrounding it. How do you do that? Identify the base points around the island, and you follow the configuration of the coast. Each island will generate their own continental zones," he said.

He said adding those islands from the baseline, the Philippines isn't dropping its claims over them since the basis for these claims, Presidential Decree 1596, would remain in effect even if a new baseline law is passed, Biscocho said.

"By drawing the baseline, we're not dropping Kalayaan or Scarborough Shoal. We are not repealing PD 1596. We are allowing it to subsist; we're not touching it," he said.

The baseline would be the "reckoning point" for the delineation of the extended continental shelf (ECS), the seabed beyond the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone, he said.

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PNP: Terror suspects set to bomb airport, camp

By Alcuin Papa

THE THREE ALLEGED FOREIGN terrorists arrested in the country last month planned to bomb a major airport and a military camp in Mindanao, according to a preliminary police report shown to the Inquirer yesterday.

The report said Jordanians Khalil Hasan Al-Alih and Abdul Abu Alassi and Indonesian Ibrahim Hakiki admitted during investigation that they were involved in plans to bomb Awang airport in Cotabato City as well as the headquarters of the 6th Infantry Division located beside the terminal.

The report was shown to the Inquirer by police sources who spoke on condition of anonymity for lack of any authority to speak on the matter.

The sources said the authorities were tracking the suspects' funding sources as well as other schools they may have had.

Police arrested Al-Alih on Feb. 18 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Alassi and Hakiki were arrested in Davao between Feb. 23 and 27.

The sources told the Inquirer the three were suspected members of an al-Qaida sleeper cell operating in the country that planned to bomb the American, Israeli and other embassies in Manila.

Hakiki was reportedly a member of Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesia-based terror group with links to the al-Qaida international network of Osama bin Laden.

The Philippine National Police, meanwhile, is also on the lookout for a senior suspect who escaped from detention in Singapore three months ago, according to a confidential report obtained by the Inquirer.

The report said Singapore police had alerted their counterparts in the Philippines to be on the lookout for Mas Selamat Kastari after they failed to find him in the city-state.

Kastari, 45, is reportedly the Jemaah Islamiyah leader in Singapore. With Nancy Carvajal

RP lawyer takes killings to UN

By Jaroma Aning

A FILIPINO LAWYER, SPEAKING on behalf of an international lawyers group, has appealed for help from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to stop the extrajudicial killings and abductions in the Philippines, which has seen quarrel lawyers and other human rights defenders.

Filipino lawyer Edre Olalia, speaking before the UNHRC's 7th session in Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday backed the concerned letters of Hina Jilani, special representative of the UN secretary general, to examine the situation of human rights defenders in the Philippines to the UN's upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Olalia, an officer of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers and the Counsels for the Defense of Liberties, delivered the oral intervention of the Belgium-based International Association of Democratic Lawyers to Jilani's special report on human rights defenders.

The periodic review covers the human rights situation in 192 member-countries based on reports from different sectors, including nongovernmental organizations. Each country's situation is then examined during a three-hour debate.

The situation in the Philippines will be examined in the fifth session, from April 7 to 18, along with four to 15 other countries.

The human rights group Karapatan said about 900 people, mostly leftist political activists, have been murdered since President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001.

Hilario's report specifically mentioned the murder of human rights and labor lawyer Gil Cujat of Sorsogon in December 2006, and the surveillance of the Quezon City-based Free Labor Legal Assistance Center, which provides free legal aid to workers.

Olalia said the attacks against lawyers violated the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1990 Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

"These are also but part of the impunity of the armies against hundreds of other human rights defenders—human rights workers, peasant organizers, trade unionists, church people and others ... within the context of a militarist counter-insurgency and avowedly called 'Oplan Bantay Laya (Freedom Watch)," he said.

He said the cases raised questions about the Philippines' membership in the council.

Earlier, UN special rapporteur Philip Alston said the government's counter-insurgency strategy that openly accuses certain organizations of being "tiled fronts" contributed to the killings. He also said the military leadership was "in a state of denial."

Although the rate of such incidents dropped last year, apparently as a result of international pressure, cases of summary executions continued to be reported, he said.

Marcos enshrined in Vanguard hall of fame

By Norman Bordadora

THIRTEEN YEARS AFTER he was driven from power in a civilian uprising, Ferdinand Marcos was elevated by the University of the Philippines' Vanguard fraternity last night to the fraternity's hall of fame.

Former first lady Imelda Marcos and her son, Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., accepted the posthumous honors given to the late dictator.

"Despite the persecution, the black propaganda, the virtual demonization of my father, you have kept faith and given him the recognition he justly deserves," Bongbong Marcos said in the acceptance speech he delivered for his family.

In an interview before the Vanguard hall of fame rites, Marcos said the honor given by the UP organization was "the beginning of the vindication of the Marcos name."

"Unlike any month (The month of June)," he said in an interview on the Vanguard grounds on the Diliman campus, traditionally the host of student solidarities.

"We all know of his value, of his worth and importance. The political atmosphere in the last few years has been ... obviously contrary to his memory," Marcos said.

"I think the people are beginning to see through the propaganda ... the lies ... and understand that his detractors have been deceiving," he added.

The former first lady, on the other hand, told reporters that once the truth regarding the Marcos family was revealed, "it will be good for the Filipino people."

The Vanguard honored Marcos for his leadership "that has been emulated by (the late) Filipino leaders" and its dedication to the "st peace with his countrymen than to see blood on (the..."

The Vanguard is made up of former UP Collegians or UP...

"May we learn from his victories as well as his mistakes," said lawyer Gilbert Reyes, chair of the board of governors of the Vanguard's alumni group, to the fraternity's tribute to Marcos.

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Japan donates ₱23.8M

AMING SCHEME pour through development, Japan is giving ¥[illegible] million to enable areas in Mindanao to build new schools, training facilities and [illegible] systems.

Japanese Ambassador Makoto Katsura last week signed nine grant contracts for infrastructure projects in Mindanao under the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiative for Reconstruction and Development (JAIRD), the second under the initiative since the program was launched in December 2006.

Duties involved in the peace process, including representatives from the government and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), witnessed the signing on March 11 in Pasig City.

"Japan strongly supports the efforts by all parties concerned to settle the decades-long conflict in Mindanao, and hopes that peace and prosperity in Mindanao will ultimately be attained. As manifested in today's projects, Japan will take an active role to support the reconstruction and development of Mindanao," Katsura said in remarks during the signing.

The Japanese Embassy said the projects were being funded under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects in the Philippines, "which are extended exclusively benefit the people at the grassroots level to enable them to experience the dividends of peace."

Under the grant, four school buildings will be built to benefit some 1,200 students, and three centers for management and livelihood training for some 34,000 trainees.

Jaya Quiaoncoan

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Pacquiao by KO, betting pundits say

To newspaper A-1

note he was the one who was robbed of victory in his decision-outside fan reminds.

Now, they say, leave their grumbling behind and let their fists do the talking. Come fight time, those fists will be very busy and exhilarated believe. It's very likely that the fight will not go the full 12 rounds.

And if betting pundits are to be believed, Pacquiao will be the main reason that the fight won't go the full route. While the betting trend predicts a knockout, the odds are against Marquez sending one.

In fact, as of Friday evening, a $100 bet on Marquez scoring a knockout would return a hefty $4,200.

The favorite

Pacquiao is listed a robust 225 favorite for the fight. Marquez is at plus 195. Simply put, a $225 bet on Pacquiao would net only $100 for winning, while a $100 wager on Marquez would return $195. If Marquez, amazingly.

Both fighters have taken great pains to whip themselves into shape. The 29-year-old Pacquiao trained daily for two hours non-stop for two months to slice around while Marquez, 34, built up his stamina with high-altitude training in the rocky mountains of Toluca, Mexico.

They easily made the weight on their first try on the scales with Pacquiao checking in at 129 pounds—a pound under the limit—and Marquez registering exactly 126 during the official weigh-in on Friday.

Both are ready to rumble. It will be a watchable Hollywood, it only for the chance that both fighters bring into the ring.

Executioner of Mexico's best

Marquez is undersized at the world champion, purely because the undefeated Pacquiao has proven to be a bigger draw in boxing because of his reputation as the executioner of Mexico's best prizefighters.

Toned-running himself into a two-fisted power puncher, Pacquiao bulldozed his way past such notables as Marco Antonio Barrera (twice), Jorge Solis, Erik Morales (twice in three fights), Oscar Larios and Hector Velasquez to round the tag "Mexican Assassin" and "Hispanic Enemy No. 1."

Marquez feels that he has all the tools to stop the Filipino ring icon, promising to use his technical skills and to fight smartly to counter Pacquiao's vaunted speed and power—a combination that has knocked out 23 of his 45 victims.

Marquez has not only three times and has two downs, including the one against Marquez.

Marquez, on the other hand, holds a 48-3-1 card with 33 knockouts.

Another Freddie Roach, a two-time Fighter of the Year, will be working Pacquiao's corner while legendary Mexican trainer and boxing Hall of Famer Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain will man Marquez's corners.

Like Dick tracks, Nacho and Beristain rounded most of terms is in the fight dubbed "Unbelievable Business" in reference to their 2004 draw.

Roach and others will bring the fight to Marquez like in Pacquiao-Marquez 2, while Beristain said they have the answer to everything Pacquiao can offer.

Full house

Its strong was the response for Pacquiao-Marquez II that co-promoters Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions have announced a full house for the 12,000-seater Event Center.

The magnitude bout, which they say is being touted as the biggest variant for Pacquiao ever, will be aired by HBO on pay-per-view (PPV) in the United States and Canada and Puerto Rico, and closed circuit television.

Though he didn't promise a knockout, Pacquiao guaranteed that he'll emerge victorious, citing his long preparation, hard work, focus and dedication during training.

Pacquiao said the knockout will come if the opponent permits itself.

Roach was more explicit: "Once he (Marquez) goes down, we'll make sure he stays down."

WEIGHING IN THEIR SENTIMENTS. The Filipinos' pride wears Filipinos as he leaps. Juan Manuel Marquez wants to regain Mexican pride. Pacquiao and Marquez carry the weight of the hopes of their respective countries on their shoulders when they face each other in the ring for their second-awaited prize fight. Between them is Bob Arum, owner of Top Rank, which is co-promoting the fight with Golden Boy Promotions. AP, INSET

FIRST EVER Dr. Patricia Licuanan, the Miriam College president, reads to more than 60 nursery and kindergarten students on Tuesday complete with props the reads herself, inside a Read-Along session held with the college's Child Study Center for its first-ever session in a private school. On Monday, the readers were done by many Cherry Pie Picache and Ariel Ureta. NONOY LACZA

Academic, movie stars at Read-Along ...

To newspaper A-1

seen version of the Inquirer Read-Along. It is about reality children believe that angels exist even if they can't be seen.

The literature started its Read-Along sessions in its Makati City office on May 2007. Some parents had been held to its main office in Makati City in malls and hospitals, among other places.

"This book reading in front of so many children was a real challenge for me," said Licuanan, who read "Stanislaw the Stomach" by Virginia A. Shanahan. "I felt like a pro, this read the story, complete with props she had made the night before.

The book is about a parent that destroyed the powerful lives of the animals when it started telling her that made every night with each other.

The children, attentive and energetic throughout the session, interacted with Licuanan by imitating the sounds of the animals in the story, which included lions, dogs, horses, elephants, tigers and crocodiles.

He didn't like the story

When Licuanan wrapped up her session, she asked the children if they liked the story she read. While most gave her a thumbs up, one student expressed his disappointment.

"No," the child shouted. "I don't like the story because the animals fought with each other," to which the president and the teachers responded with laughter.

Licuanan said she was glad the children freely expressed themselves as this was exactly what they were being taught to do in school.

Then it was Atenista's turn to read. Dressed in full dramatic garb, his circle the Lineflight when he read Cedric Diggory Riddell's "Somersby Hijabs at the Discotheque." After his performance, his classmates got on their feet, clapping.

Aquino mentioned the need to read reading skills to his team who were fully to read him stories every night before he goes to bed.

Clap if you're happy

"If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap, clap). ..." Dr. Ian Casas hums into song when it was her turn to tell a story. The children were more than happy to comply.

"When I tell my stories, I try to incorporate songs, dances, and a little choreography," said Dr. Ian Casas, a professional storytelling for 13 years. "That's how you keep the children's attention. Tell your stories animated."

She started the session with the story, "Mr. Wiggle and Mr. Waggle," using her thumbs to act out the two lead characters. The students joined in by imitating her gestures.

Heidi Hidalgo, Dr. Ian Casas left for the United States when she was 13 and settled there with her family. She grew in to the children's request for more stories and followed up with two more tales.

Handmade tales

Dr. Ian Casas is in the country to hold a series of workshops on handmade tales which is sponsored by Scholastic Publishing. Scholastic, which distributed reading materials to the children after the session, has been sponsoring Dr. Ian Casas since 2002. She holds storytelling workshops all over the country.

Her awards include the Storytelling Media Award, Children's Music Web Award, Storytelling World Honoree and NAPPA Honor for her children's books and storytelling CDs.

Having conducted storytelling sessions in Singapore, Malaysia, Canada and all over the US, she gets her inspiration from talking to the children's teachers.

"Sometimes, they would ask me to write materials to help them teach their students about story, love or sharing," she said.

First children's story

Uniris said this was his first real attempt at writing a children's story, although he had been thinking about it for some time.

He said he expected to read the story in front of real-school children so he went to a Filipino.

When he noticed that the CEC children, aged 4 to 6 years old, would understand the story better if it were in English, he translated the story into English right there and then.

Dr. Ian Casas thanked the Inquirer for spearheading the Read-Along sessions. "It's all about literacy and reaching children how to see language as their advantage. Teach them to read and you teach them to decode anything...from math to science, Science it."

After all, she said, "If children can't read, what else can they do?"

From page A-1

Wish come true: Teen helps old man who made life 'beautiful'

to bring him the good news.

She greeted Mang Ramon like he was her grandfather. His biggest fan, complimented him on his good looks. "You are so handsome, Mang Ramon!") and even took pictures.

Mang Ramon, looking half his age in a crisp white shirt, happily autographed everyone to his heart.

After 22 years of selling newspapers, candy and cigarettes at a corner of Pasay de Roxas in Makati City, he was quite used to dealing with people from all walks of life. He had made lots of friends, including the Miranda's.

Waving from the car

Mang Ramon said he knew Miranda's grandmother and remembered Miranda as a toddler waving to him from their car.

He was especially popular with foreigners and showed off a cabinet full of long-stowed pole shirts—gifts from his international friends.

He told his guests about a Russian woman who gave him a memento before she left the Philippines. He also shared the story about an American woman who asked him to come with her, to which Mang Ramon replied, "Sorry, but I love my wife."

It was Mang Ramon's cheerful personality which caught Miranda's attention, like the glimpses of this whenever her father would stop by his corner to chat with the old man.

Harder than it looks

Last year, armed with a video camera, she decided to "interview" herself to Mang Ramon's life—if only for a day.

"I spent the afternoon trying to document his simple man's life and help him sell newspapers, candies and cigarettes. I thought this would be it, it would be a piece of cake. I was wrong! My nose tweaked at the weight of the goods within a few minutes. Before me, was not so easy as it looks," Miranda wrote in the "Banner of Good Street" for neighborhood.

When a close friend, Joey Cadiz, died at 18, Miranda resolved "to tell the world about how my friends and family valued the day and made life beautiful for me. It was my way of thanking them for who I am now," she wrote in Evangelista.

Symbol of honesty, hard work

She also said she considered Mang Ramon a symbol of hope for the country because of his honesty and hard work.

Miranda's older old son are the old sons of his usual corner for three days, she got worried. She was informed by other readers that he was in the intensive care unit of a government hospital being treated for severe asthma.

Concerned, Miranda not only went to the hospital, she also sent Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay asking for help.

Binay responded by taking care of Mang Ramon's medicines. He also sent a doctor to the newspaper vendor's home to check on him.

Sold out

Aside from financial assistance, Mang Ramon will also receive groceries from the barangay.

"Until he long narrow eh ga-ching you're making regards with also up during life. I want to to get well to be able to sell newspapers again," he told the Inquirer, grateful for the help.

Mang Ramon would have posed for the camera holding up a copy of the Inquirer, but there were no copies of the paper left.

"Uno na nun. Hindi nabili ng mahon yan eh. (Oh well, it's the first to be sold out)," he said.

The judges who selected the 22-letter entries consisted of 10 Inquirer editors and executives.

"Whatever winner or the books of their rigorous and loyal legions reading habit and the circumstances that surrounded their writers.

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BALLOU Scouted by naval life in Zamboanga.

Balut ...

From page A1

...de Zamboanga before deciding to join the PMA in 21.

"Initially, I was the one who urged Bong-bong to join the military so he could have a stable job," Ernesto Que, a close friend of the family told the Inquirer.

Que said that early on, he had noted Bongbong's deep interest in guns.

His wife, Maria Lourdes, agreed, saying, "Binaywabang mandalas siya. Kapag lang kailangan niyang gumalaw (She's very intelligent, but needs to be guided)."

Que said he had always reminded Bongbong to be God-fearing and just in all times.

He said his last message to Bongbong was: "You're a military officer now, but always remember to serve God and the people, not [mere] individuals."

Bongbong's sister Hazel had only praise for him. She also said that although they parted paused ea, Bongbong still dedicated time. "Sweet bagay." Aside Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Palm Sunday starts week ...

From page A1

the hearts of every Filipino," said Fr. Genaro Dina, head of the liturgical affairs ministry of the Archdiocese of Manila.

Holy Week is the series of Church observances commemorating the various events in the final days of Christ's life—His Passion and the events which immediately led up to it. It is the week which precedes the greatest of all Christian feasts, the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

In Naples on Palm Sunday, commemorating Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and ends in the three sacred days of Holy Week.

Shrouds Thursday, derived from Latin "mandatum" in love commandment as he loves us, also celebrates Easter institution of the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Ordination. Good Friday commemorates Christ's crucifixion and death and Holy Saturday is the final night before the Feast of the Resurrection, which begins at the Easter Vigil.

Buildup to Easter

The Church provides the rites and worship dedicated to solemnizing the final events of Christ's life so that Holy Week in generally a busy time for Catholics in the Philippines as they build up to the great feast of Easter.

According to Dina, the many rituals spread the week in total solemnity is something peculiar to the culture these cultures religious traditions.

He said the Holy Week celebrations in Rome, where the seat of government of the Catholic Church is located, are nowhere as exuberant as in the Philippines.

A foreigner observing the bustling streets of Manila would convince the sudden slack in activities during the seven days of Holy Week, he said.

'Everything stops'

"It is as if everything stops. Everything becomes slower. The frantic and celebrations so as temporary that it affects the normal flow of life of Filipinos," he said.

Holy Week in the Philippines starts with the celebration of Palm Sunday, or Pasion Dominga.

While the worship services are usually remembered for the blessing of the palms, Dina said the palms are actually just an auxiliary to the faithful's understanding of the special importance of this particular Sunday.

It is on Palm Sunday that the story of Christ's Passion is read from the Gospel, which acts as a sort of *paratexto* for what will unfold during the rest of the week.

Palm Sunday not only marks Christ's entry into Jerusalem but, more importantly, symbolizes the faithful's desire to accompany Christ, Dina said.

Palms welcomed champs

The Jews waved palms to welcome Jesus' entry into Dark city during the customary symbol for their original.

According to Dina, the Romans also used palms to welcome their champions returning from war.

"It is like saying, 'we will be with you until the end,'" said Dina.

In the Philippines, each region and parish have their own traditions on celebrating Palm Sunday. Some hold solemn processions before entering the Church grounds to dramatize Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

In some provinces, women, in a tradition known as "paghahabag," lay pieces of cloth or coats on the road leading to the Church as devotional symbols of their welcome of the Messiah, Dina said.

The more devout among them use rags in piece of fabric used as a wrap-around skirt) that had been passed down from generation to generation specifically for the occasion.

To dramatize Christ's entry into Jerusalem, old women in the provinces would lay their "rags" on the ground for the parish priest, acting as the Christ figure, to walk on as he makes his way to the Church.

Alay Kapwa Sunday

Today, the Philippines into celebrates "Alay Kapwa Sunday."

Alay Kapwa, or the offering of oneself to one's neighbor, is an evangelization program which the

PALMS' MEANING The Lenten period returns its holiest week with the nation's observance today of Palm Sunday, which celebrates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to hallelujahs and palms waving in boarded welcome. More significant to Christians, the day marks the start of the redemption of mankind by the Savior Jesus Christ. AFP/JOEYRAZ

Fasting not only holy, it's ...

From page A1

doctors and nutrition experts are viewing the passion beyond the perspective of piety and more in the realm of science.

Having studied the effects on the human body of fasting and abstinence from meat—a no-effort transformation into "potato pigs"—they're now recognizing what they claim as a most effective method for delaying aging, increasing one's life span, and making her, her life choices in general.

"One of the [results] of fasting is that it activates the aging process," says Dr. Omar Arabia, a researcher of integrative medicine and a vegetarian for 33 years.

Ideally, a fast lasts 24 hours. According to Arabia, the forms of fasting include the *fahra* fast (where one takes only juices), water fast, baby-food-only fast and "soft-vegetarian" (absolutely no fast-or drink).

"After one fast, even the fastest of food becomes yummy enough. And the mind and mental powers become so strong," says Arabia.

But both Arabia and licensed dietitian Rhonda Sarona warn that fasting may not be suitable for people with medical conditions such as diabetes, and that those planning to fast on a regular basis should seek medical supervision.

Melatonin

Fasting is as close as one can get to finding the fountain of youth, says Arabia and Sarona, a former director of health and wellness of the Manila Adventist Church and have a full-time health advocate and author of nutrition books.

They cite the theory that the production of the hormone melatonin in the body increases during periods of fasting.

Melatonin, also known as the sleep hormone, is naturally produced in all organisms, whether plant or animal. Its many complex organisms such as humans, melatonin is produced in the pineal gland, the retina and the gastrointestinal tract.

Scientific studies have shown that melatonin slows the aging process. (As an antioxidant, it is said to help fight tumors. It has also been observed to be an immunity enhancer and antidepressant, and may even help lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure.)

Fix-and-rejuvenate hormone

In "Blood Purifier: How to Rebuild Your Blood and Achieve Optimal Health through Nutrition and Lifestyle," Dr. Syd Hedley, who specializes in internal medicine, quotes studies showing that food restriction and fasting boost melatonin production.

Hedley also cites evidence that melatonin can stun the body's daily internal clock. Quoting a study, he adds: melatonin as a "fix-and-rejuvenate" nighttime hormone whose turning and general repair effects actually help delay some of the changes normally attributed to aging.

When and how

Fasting technically commences within the first 12 to 24 hours, Will Carroll writes in "Health Benefits of Fasting."

This means that a fast does not chronically start until the body's carbohydrate stores, as opposed to protein stores, begin to be used as an energy source. (Once protein stores begin to be depleted for energy, resulting in loss of muscle mass, a person is technically "starving.")

Arabia says fasting may be done once or twice a month under medical supervision.

The first fast may last from sunrise to lunchtime, and gradually increase in length in later months to sunset, and then from sunrise to sunrise.

The "graduation" to the next fasting level will depend on a person's capacity, Arabia says.

Melatonin recommends a light meal after a fast.

But says even short-term fasting must be planned thoroughly and is beneficial to most people.

But Ernesto Y. Sonido Ph.D., of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, says there is nothing to fast to be careful to avoid "yoyo dieting."

This unhealthy habit is characterized by a cycle of losing and regaining weight, in which a person attempts to lose a significant number of pounds in a short period of time through a rigid diet or a fast, and abruptly discontinues it for one reason or another.

As a result, the person becomes even heavier than before the diet or the fast started.

"A person who undergoes this cycle is more at risk of developing chronic [ailments] such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes," says Sonido.

Lunar cycles

Arabia himself fasts during certain lunar cycles—during the new moon and full moon, particularly.

This is when people are "mentally more agitated," he continues, citing "lunacy psychiatry" a Canada-based school of psychiatry.

"The masters in ayurveda and the tantra science based on that it is best to encourage people to fast [during this period], with proper guidance, to balance the mind," he says.

Arabia's fast lasts periodically during for the past 14 years and is sustained by ingesting virtually nothing for a 24-hour period.

He advises those interested in fasting to first undergo a "transition period" of eating only plant-based food.

Ultimately, he says, fasting purifies the mind.

And that's more than a mouthful for those about to reluctantly forego their favorite halalo (food, morsel) this Holy Week.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, March 16, 2008
Palm Sunday
(Sunday of the Lord's Passion)
1st Reading: Is 50:4-7

The Lord Yahweh has taught me so I speak to his disciple and I know how to sustain the weary. Morning after morning he rouses my ear to hear, as those like a disciple. The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear. I have not rebelled, nor have I withdrawn. I offered my back to those who pulled my beard; neither did I shield my face from shame, spittle and disgrace. I have not disgusted, for the Lord Yahweh comes to my help. He has called his every face, knowing that I will not be disgraced.

2nd Reading: Phil 2:6-11

Though being divine in nature, Christ Jesus did not think to be his equality with God, but emptied himself, taking on the nature of a servant, made in human likeness, and in his appearance found as a man. He humbled himself by being obedient to death, death on the cross. That is why God exalted him and gave him the name which outshines all names, so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should bend in heaven, on earth and among the dead, and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: Mt 27:11-54

Jesus stood before the governor who questioned him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "You say so."

The chief priests and the elders accused him, but he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you hear all the charges they bring against you?" But he did not answer, even a single question, so that the governor wondered.

It was customary for the governor to release any prisoner the people asked for on the occasion of the festival. Now there was a well-known prisoner called Barabbas. As the crowds had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Whom do you want me to set free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" He said this, for he knew that it was out of envy.

As Pilate was sitting in court, his wife sent him this message, "Have nothing to do with that holy man, because of how I had a dream last night that disturbed me greatly."

But the chief priests and the elders stirred the crowds to ask for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus. When the governor asked them again, "Which of the two do you want me to set free?" they answered, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "And what shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?" All answered, "Crucify him!" Pilate insisted, "What evil has he done?" But they shouted louder, "Crucify him!"

Pilate realized that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was about to break. He then asked for water and washed his hands before the people, saying, "I am not responsible for this blood. It is your doing." And all the people answered, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children."

Then Pilate set Barabbas free, but had Jesus scourged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away from into the palace of the governor and the whole troop gathered around him. They stripped him and dressed him in a purple military cloak. Then, weaving a crown of thorns, they forced it onto his head, and placed a reed in his right hand. They knelt before Jesus and mocked him, saying, "Long life to the King of the Jews!" They spat on him, took the reed from his hand and struck him on the head with it.

When they had finished mocking him, they pulled off the purple cloak and dressed him in his own clothes again, and led him out to be crucified.

On the way they met a man from Cyrene called Simon, and forced him to carry the cross of Jesus. When they reached the place called Golgotha (or Calvary) which means the Skull, they offered him wine mixed with gall; when he had tasted it he would not drink it.

Then they crucified him and divided his clothes among themselves, casting lots to decide what each should take. Then they sat down to guard him. His statement of his offense was displayed above his head and it read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." They also crucified two bandits with him, one on his right and one on his left.

People passing by shook their heads and insulted him, saying, "Aha! So you will destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days. Now save yourself and come down from the cross, if you are Son of God."

In the same way the chief priests, the Elders and the teachers of the Law mocked him. They said, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself. Let the King of Israel now come down from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, let God rescue him if God wants him, since he himself said: 'I am the Son of God.'"

Even the soldiers who were crucified with him taunted him.

Now suddenly darkness fell over the whole land until mid-afternoon. At about three o'clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lemma sabachthani?" which means: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders, those of the bystanders said, "He is calling for Elijah." And one of them went quickly, took a sponge and soaked it in vinegar, put it on a reed and gave him him to drink. Others said, "Leave him alone, let us see whether Elijah comes to his rescue."

Then Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and gave up his spirit.

Just then the curtain of the Temple sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and several holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus, entered the Holy City and appeared to many.

The captain and the other soldiers who guarded Jesus were greatly terrified when they saw the earthquake and all that had happened, and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Consecration

With palms held aloft we salute the Lord with shouts of "Hosanna!" We join the children of Jerusalem in honoring Him as He who comes toward the name of the Lord.

As he's the days we share will become torn as we behold our King entering as we are of pride his children. As he is the suffering servant, the one who will endure great agony that we might know everlasting peace.

May this week full of weeks deepen our faith and make us truly grateful for all that our God does to show us His love.

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DOTC, DPWH launch Holy Week programs

By Rizz T. Olvis and Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and Communications and the Department of Public Works and Highways have geared up to make the voyages of motorists expected to make a beeline for the provinces during Holy Week, from March 17 to 23.

Transportation Secretary Leandro R. Mendoza announced yesterday the launch of "Oplan Semana Santa 2008" and said the department would actively implement safety and security measures at all airports, seaports and bus terminals.

For his part, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. ordered all the department's regional directors and district engineers to activate the agency's "Lakbay Alalay (Travel Assistance)" program, which seeks to ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims and vacationers.

The program activates road-side incident-assistance and vehicle-maintenance centers which will seek to prevent the occurrence of traffic and provide immediate response to road emergency situations.

Security tightened

Ebdane has instructed department personnel to make sure that all road incidents are to point shape and size of potholes that pavement markings are reflectorized to guide night-driving motorists; that kilometer posts that serve as guides have legible markings, and that informational and directional signs are installed at conspicuous locations along national roads.

"We will also deploy equipment and mechanics to remove-clear debris at critical areas along national roads to provide immediate assistance to emergency road disasters," he said.

The Philippine Coast Guard, meanwhile, has begun tightening security at Manila's seaports in anticipation of the number of people taking ships to the provinces.

The DOTC's Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board said land transportation Office will put up desks at major bus terminals at Edsa-Kamuning, Edsa-Cubao and SM Mall (Autocon, Center), Cubao in Quezon City; Mcdonaldo, Caloocan City; Buendia, Edsa, Pasay, Barbaro and Timog, Pasay City; Dimasalang, Maceda, Espana and Lawton in Manila, and in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Deployment of personnel

The DOTC Public Assistance Center will also deploy field personnel at major terminals of the Philippine National Railways, Light Rail Transit (LRT) 1 and 2 and Metro Rail Transit (MRT) 3 to help travelers using rail transport.

The Air Transportation Office, the Manila International Airport Authority and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority will set up similar facilities for those taking air transport.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) and Coast Guard will do the same for sea transport at major ports in the North Harbor and South Harbor.

All DOTC field personnel, members of its sectoral offices and attached agencies, will be wearing their uniforms and IDs for the duration of "Oplan Semana Santa 2008."

The public may call the DOTC Public Assistance Center Hotline 7305 through landline or send text messages to 0920-2552020 and 0920-4409634 to make transportation-related queries, file complaints and report traffic-related incidents.

Oil firms raise fuel prices anew

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH WORLD OIL PRICES surging to new record highs, local oil companies raised again yesterday the pump prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. implemented its price adjustment effective at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, followed by Petron Corp. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. at 6 a.m. and Chevron Philippines Inc. at noon.

Total (Philippines) Corp. adjusted prices at 4 p.m. today.

Shell Philippines Inc. declined to disclose that they could hike prices any time during the weekend, as their discretion.

Industry data showed that the regional benchmark Dubai crude hit an average of $96.11 a barrel from March 1-13, $8 a barrel higher than last month's average.

It surged to an all-time high of $100.17 a barrel last Friday.

Based on the Department of Energy's weekly monitoring, world oil prices continued to reach record highs for four consecutive weeks due to lingering supply concerns and the weakness of the US dollar.

Weak dollar primary reason

"Oil market analysts believe that speculative investments attracted by the weak US dollar is the primary reason oil prices have risen to but in recent months. Traders quoted said that since the 'black gold' is priced in dollars and buyers and speculators are armed with stronger currencies, crude futures offer a hedge against the falling dollar. Thus, oil futures bought and sold in dollars are more attractive to foreign investors," the DOE monitoring said.

"While some analysts foresee oil prices could soon to the roaring months amid concerns about slowing US economic growth, other analysts, however, believe that if US demand declines, the surging energy demand from China and India would absorb the slack. In such, oil prices will show little signs of abating," it added.

Unconscionable burden

The militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and the government should consider cutting the 12 percent value-added tax imposed on petroleum products in the light of escalating oil prices.

"SAT collections, it can be argued, merely go to debt payments and corruption, and thus are an unconscionable burden on the people. We are now experiencing an oil crisis. We will organize power actions against this misplaced price hikes," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said.

The latest price increase brought the prices of premium unleaded gasoline to between P62.67 and P67.15 a liter, of diesel to between P50.41 and P59.50 a liter and kerosene to between P40.80 and P48.20 a liter.

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Travel on new highway for free

DUBBED AS ONE OF the "dream highways," the 69.75-kilometer Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) will be open to motorists free for free during the entire Holy Week, Malacañang announced yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will proclaim on Tuesday morning the seven-segment that will link the Subic Bay Freeport to the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) in Tarlac.

Once officially opened, motorists can avoid traffic in the third or fourth week of April—traveling from Clark to Subic will take only 35 minutes, officials said.

Edgardo Pamintuan, head of the Clark Development Council, said President Arroyo also wants to connect the NLEX southwards with the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) via Commonwealth and Mindanao Avenues in Quezon City, and extend the NLEX northwards to Bataan, in Luzon, via the towns of La Paz and Gerona in Tarlac.

The President hopes to complete the "dream highways" before her term ends in 2010, said Pamintuan at the unveiling of the governor's TV talk show, "Gobernor Speaks" hosted by Pena Lis-democratic Manila Congressman, Michael Lim Ofilena.

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OPINION

Reckless imprudence

EDITORIAL

THE DEBATE CONTINUES TO ZERO IN ON THE precise grounds for the culpability of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Spratlys deal. Raul Gonzalez and Merceditas Gutierrez both insist it was a "preexploratory" agreement, hence, didn't require presidential notification of Congress. On the other hand, Eduardo Mañalac and the China National Offshore Oil Co., and The China Daily (in reports going back to 2005), all refer to the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking as "exploration."

Regardless of the press releases and Palace ceremonies that trumpeted the deal, and regardless of the administration's insistence that if it calls an exploration deal a pre-exploration arrangement then it must not be an exploration deal, the fact is our Constitution requires any president who authorizes an exploration deal to notify Congress about it.

And so, the question comes to this: Has the President failed to live up to her constitutional obligations? And was her failure to do so prompted by a policy of deceit and meant to suppress information that Congress and the public are entitled to? Has it further resulted in the mortgaging of a carefully nurtured relationship with China?

As pointed out in this space before, our presidents conduct foreign policy. To that end, they certify specified legislation as urgent, or marshal their majorities in Congress to halt or delay certain congressional acts. The Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO) exists for several reasons, among them, closer coordination and cooperation in the enactment of "foreign relations"—not just domestic—legislation.

The closest proposition that Congress is independent of the Executive aside (more fiction than fact, then as now), the members of foreign policy is a presidential prerogative. Along with this prerogative is the responsibility to ensure that no congressional action unduly disturbs foreign policy; and this includes keeping Congress informed of that policy and its nuances, foreign and domestic.

When Rep. Antonio Cuenco announced that the House of Representatives abruptly halted deliberations on House Bill 3216, a measure that delineates Philippine territory in the South China Sea (extending it to the Kalayaan Islands Group and Scarborough Shoal, in keeping with the archipelagic nature of our national territory and with international agreements), and justified the move on the grounds he'd been informed by the Chinese embassy of their objections, what does this tell us?

It tells us that this administration's China policy is being terribly mishandled—by the administration itself. We say this because for its part, China followed diplomatic protocol in asserting its own policy concerning the Spratlys, by submitting a note verbale to our embassy in Beijing.

What is unclear is whether the Department of Foreign Affairs then properly informed the President of the note, and if she in turn, and in timely fashion, informed Congress of the note, and then placed it in the context of her administration's policy concerning China and our Spratlys claim.

This context is necessary if Congress is to properly do its job in balancing our international (i.e., the UN deadline for defining our territorial base line) and bilateral (i.e., with China) obligations and rights. The House, for one, is acting befuddled on this point. The DFA seems more concerned with preventing panic than in shedding light. The PLLO is utterly silent; and the President, so rarely singing praises to the proposed Lakas-Kampi merger, leaves her allies hanging out to dry in the House.

Our country has enjoyed warm and productive relations with the People's Republic of China since Ferdinand Marcos hooked the Cold War trend and opened diplomatic relations with that country. It is often said of the leaders of that country that they think ahead in terms of centuries. While our leaders aren't known for such long-range foresight, the general trend in Sino-RP relations has been, on the whole, prudent and productive.

What China and the Filipino people are saddled with, now, are the unfolding consequences of our government's foreign policy vis-à-vis China, after the administration conducted it with recklessness and imprudence (some say because of inordinate greed) and, before our domestic institutions, with enough dissembling and bad faith as to jeopardize what had been so carefully nurtured until recently. In a word, irresponsibility has become the cornerstone of our China policy.

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A letter from Amanda

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

REMEMBER MY COLUMN OF FEB. 17 IN WHICH I wrote about "Amanda"? That young girl, a former classmate in an envelope marked "Personal and Confidential" and that from the circumstances, I recalled of our acquaintance, "the Amanda you write about might be me." It was signed simply "Amanda" without a surname and did not indicate a return address. So I knew no way of thanking her for her thoughtfulness except through the column.

I also have to apologize to her for this tardy reply. I just received her letter late Wednesday morning (more on the hesitant letter she had sent it.

She is the Amanda I never about dreamily like an adolescent swain. I am glad she is still alive and, as she says, has been married for 33 years. I was delighted to receive her cherishing letter and wish I could publish it in full here—if she would only give me her permission. Since writing this article last month, I have received many callers asking for more information about my semi-remembered friend, but I could not oblige for reasons explained to them. I am sure they will be gratified to know that she is still up and about, but more likely not as sprightly as before, since our friendship began more than half a century ago.

Amanda's letter tells me enough about her present life and how she looks today. Like me, she must already be in her eighties because she was younger than her sister Ursula, who was two years older than me. Her despite the unfavorable aspects of Amanda's age, I am sure that the passing years have blanked tender memories and made her tummy more generous and serene.

I would like to see her again, of course, for lasting true pleasure, I will simply relish what I have in my files to retain the "ephemeral vision" of Amanda."

Amanda's children and my sons while open

to smiling as they read this column will probably be teasing their supportive parents over what they will imagine was our "bi-married" love. There was none, of course, I never said more than, although I did muster about what might have been if I had been lucky enough and plucky enough to woo and win Amanda. That unfortunate romance never happened. As her sensed her it, we were one separate ways, quietly meeting each other, and it is only now that we have met again, not even personally.

I remember that when dark family moved to another place after the Japanese Occupation, I continued to see Ursula and walked her to her home on every afternoon after her classes in the Centro Escolar. I didn't see nor Amanda during those days and next, when we became busy with our studies, we eventually lost track of each other. There was one time afterwards, however, when I attended the wake of a friend's father and I saw Amanda again. She came with her husband. I was rather nonplussed when I found her nervously ask him, "Where were we married?" I wondered how she could have forgotten such a date, but perhaps I just misunderstood.

Incidentally, Cecilia, that common friend we were enrolling, was also near in the like Ursula. I knew her through her younger sister Bess who was my classmate in 1st Grading. Inc came a dentist and one day she came to our house to consult about a case involving one of her sons. We didn't see each other then, until one New Year's Day, between after the strike of midnight when she called me up to greet me. I was much surprised to be phoned, and never to what she continued doing this regularly, every New Year's Day for so many years without fail.

I got so used to her calls that, after greeting everyone in the house, I would sit by the telephone to wait for her greetings.

I think it was about three years ago when I waited near the telephone for her usual call but it didn't come. After the general and warm sentiments embodying the New Year, I called up Cecilia to give her my own greetings. The first words she uttered over my call were, "She's gone, sir." I asked him whom, and he answered, "She's dead, sir. She died last August." I was shocked and saddened and also disappointed that no one had informed me of her passing, not even her sister Bess.

My impression with Amanda was different, for her letter confirmed me with the suspicion that she is still alive and, more than that, enjoying a happy life with such essential feeling to know that old friends we knew long ago and unexpressed affair in many years without fuss or would have suddenly come back to remember and renew old ties and make us young again. This is the special deterioration of old people—but the young cannot enjoy until they become old like us.

Let me add before I close this case of remembrance and discovery that I was thrilled beyond measure to receive Amanda's wonderful letter. The envelope named that what it contained was "Personal and Confidential" and I interpreted it as such. I responded to her last Monday through the already over-satisfied administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. It was not.

Instead, what I received was a years-gone of information in the library of my colleagues' long written of Lucado with applause of acquiry, but my subject today is the beautiful Amanda.

Remember . . .

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU MAKE HOLY WEEK?

Answer: Get ordinary sweet, and, "Soft like hell" out of it!

* * *

It's Holy Week once again, that special time of the year when we "boil the hell" out of our hearts in response to God who gave His only Son, and in gratitude to Jesus who suffered, died and rose again for us. May the words uttered of us give us all a chance to distress very important 911 to life, namely: Love, Selfless, Renew.

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mt. 26,14-27:66) we hear the account of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our just be heaven of the chant, the down of our blood and true harvest a part of The Paschal Mystery. Our faith must be real, actual and practical, not just emotional, devotional and intellectual. Remember for our not only say He loved us. He died for us. Let us then take time to reflect on our brothers and sisters in the concrete way in the here and now.

* * *

Here's a thought to ponder, from a blood donor: "I gave blood. He gave His life; I gave a pint, He gave it all. My corvette was shiny and classy, the nails were large and cruel; the car was cold and soulless, the cross was rough and hard; my motives was kind and genuine, the soldiers were mean and cruel; the crowd applauded my sacrifice, the star-studded and revelled; mine was given to prolong life, His was given for eternal life."

* * *

Last week, I visited and prayed over a 75-year old woman who has cancerous cancer. As I was about to leave, she held on to my hand and said: "SING, I am so afraid." My words are deep from my heart and I felt her loneliness and fear on the doorsteps of death. There was something in the way she said it, and in the look in her eyes that really touched my heart and made her want to hear the melody of music, the final, definitive goodbye. Thank God for the gift of eternal life that makes all our good-

byes tentative and meaningful.

* * *

Sooner or later, we all will die. We all will take that lonely, unknown road at the end of our lives. We all have to reckon with our mortality. What anxious me is that some people live as if their lives and power will never end. And even in their sunset years they continue to live a life of sin, disappointed and lies! Do they ever really think they could get away with it, and will be so privileged again in the next life?

* * *

"IN MY FINAL HOUR, WILL THIS MIT TER?" This is a very good question to raise whenever we find ourselves so engrossed about anything or anyone. What distresses most in the end is that we have, that we really loved. Remember, a lot of things are worry about much now, won't even matter five minutes after you're gone.

* * *

There are trying and confusing times when we are searching for the truth, and when we are discerning our involvement with our people and our nation. Fr Herbert Schulz, SVD, puts forth two thoughts which could be of big help to us. The first one is "our lands are clouds," i.e., neither favor nor fear will prevent us from speaking the truth. (Borrowed from Blessed Cardinal Clemens Von Galen during the Nazi regime in Germany.) The second one is: "I am the king's good servant, but God's servant first." (Borrowed from St. Thomas Moore, when asked to put aside his moral principles.) Yes, life is short and fleeting. We must get busy picking and loving, not hoarding and lying till the very end!

* * *

Remember, a man died on that first Holy Week because He stood for the truth, and He refused to lie. Remember too that this man died because of fabrications and lies. Remember too that this man died because the crowd did not care, and His chosen disciples were too frail. Yes, let us all remember, during the Holy Week, His supreme sacrifice, and how we can prevent that from dying again and again in our present day and time.

* * *

Especially not only during Holy Week, let us go B-A-S-I-C-S-S-S: S—Seek Forgiveness (Return to God, ask for forgiveness, go to confession as often as possible); C—Communion (Receive the Lord, let Him enter your heart); C—Compassion (Get rid of envy, gossip and cruel words); S—Scriptures (Meditate, do Lectio Divina); S—Others (Do something with joy); S—Service (Have a "purpose" with God which only you and He know).

* * *

Let the end with a story about a child who asked his father: "Why do I need to be born, Dad?"

His father replied: "My child, when you discover the lonely path, draw in no place to fall over be only way to go."

A friend, beating Holy Week everyone!

Wishing you the best hoping that, one can envision happens in each one of us, and in our nation, beginning with our government and the church leaders. Amen.

* * *

Watch the Mindoro tragedy Palm Sunday Recollection at the Meralco Theater today over GMA-7, starting 9 a.m. The theme for this year's recollection is "SEEK HIGH-NESS."

* * *

A tomorrow with the Lord:

Lord, help me to remember your love, and help me not to forget to love. Amen.

Untrammeled search for truth

WITH DUE RESPECT

Antonio V. Bautista Gumabon

MORE THAN JUST RECOMMENDING THE "RATIfication of EO 464," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines really wanted a "search for the truth" done by "unintervened, open-field and on the private view where questions about the moral norm... theory of the present government are being raised."

Completing the CBCP's list: Thus, its next, Presidents' Management Group's execution of its source Order 464 and Memorandum Circular 108—described by Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera as a mere "symbolic act"—does not satisfy the CBCP's desideratum of a "determined and scrupulous" way of "Seeking the Truth, Restoring Integrity."

That is why to "complete the job" of our bishops, I urged the President last Sunday to set before Media dear Romulo Neri mouth freely at the Senate probe. Such hearsaying will demonstrate to the Filipino people that we are yearned to help in speeding to the CBCP's plea. It will definitely help in rebuilding her credibility to the middle forces and help the charge that the restoration was just "another double speak."

To be sure, the CBCP's blanket use (during of the Feb. 12 Arbor mass) of the adage of our bishops, CBCP is more reserved or facilitator, not leader further the discovery of the truth. But, if the President continues to tender—improperly in my humble view—executive privilege to him of the statement he gave to the reporters that CBCP may "only be personally involved in the alleged C5E bribery will guarantee confidence. The more love it is learned from speaking, the worse will GMA's public pressure be.

Needless to say, NBN mess. As it is now, there has been no evidence directly linking GMA to the alleged C5E bribe corruption. On her own, by innuendo, not even remotely has testified that GMA was part of the hotel. Michael has just in Antonio definitively said that GMA was a direct beneficiary of the supposed $130 million "commission." Moreover, the governing but unidentified Ms. Ong, speaking, GMA at founding the belief that Neri's positive testimony would directly and personally link her to the crime.

During the Supreme Court hearing, there were three specific questions that the President did not want Neri to respond to: "(1) Did the President have any interest in the NBN project? (2) Did the President order Neri to prioritize the NBN? and, (3) Did she order the contravention of the project despite his allegations of bribery?"

Finding I cannot understand why the President did not want Neri to answer those simple questions. If the statements are in the negative, then there is absolutely nothing to worry about. She would not be linked to the alleged bribery. So, the desire to silence Neri must stem from the belief that the answers would be to the positive. "Yes, she was involved in the project." Yes, she ordered the project to be prioritized. Yes, she wanted the project to continue despite the allegations of bribery."

Ironically, this statement on secrecy merely by elites the claims of the 80 farmer Senior Citizens. Isn't this what CBCP is that GMA must do: Come out of her cocoonness and come up" of the NBN mess. If she were innocent, why in the world would she prevent Neri from telling the truth? Worse, by choosing silence, she is unable to explain her perceived complicity in the mess.

Talking about unintended consequences, in my last column, I explained that, based on the parliamentary history of the constitutional decision in "treason is Senate," Neri's plea for silence cannot be granted. However, there have been reports that tremendous pressures are allegedly being exerted on the justices to reverse, or modify or find some wayward interpretations of the sacrosanct Senate ruling. The lower court pressures are normal, and that the justices will not cave in to them and will decide according to what became dearly settled. They know that history will ultimately judge them.

However, it is entirely possible that the Court, for some lower reasons beyond my range view, may not probably take to favor of secrecy. Denied the presidential right to search for truth, the Senate have no authority does to investigations. That may be the wish of the civil advisers of the President. But, I think that abruptly and inconclusively terminating the Senate's probes is not good for her.

In the long term—after the smoke the dust of passes—the country will come out and fully will merely overcome the darkness. The truth cannot be hidden forever. It's most come out, and as sure as the rising sun it will, it is not better for all, especially for GMA, that it should come from some while she is still in her term and not remain over possible damage and prejudice not take too?

The only independent and credible mass movement that the public will trusts in the search for truth are the Senate and the Supreme Court. Should these two fail to unravel the complete truth, the people—the middle forces, those who are still willing to wait for a conclusive, moral change of leaders in mid 2010—may find it very hope in our not-too-distant future presidents. They may once again take to the streets and the streets to "Oust the GMA" through the people's judiciary—GMA "turn type of people power."

Indeed, a sudden halt of the Senate's search for truth caused by a surprise ruling of the Supreme Court could strike the ripples point in the process of... made like the Hyde Park Speakers' Corner in Edsa I, or the peaceful walk out in Edsa II. Possibly the most severe to the truth, our "unhappy" and "deserved" people may just erupt in volcanic "violence and action" to confront their seething frustrations.

* * *

Comments are welcome at (bs)bautistagumabon@hotmail.com.

Under the neon lights

THE DARK DOORS OF the DEPARTMENT STORE spill out hords of students in white uniforms, clutching blue plastic bags. It is 6 p.m. on a Friday night, and many more pour into the mall past the cavernous fan-engine red sign announcing a 70-day sale.

A half block away, a voice booms like a television preacher. Follow the voice, and the way opens into a brightly-lit square, where fishball vendors, juice vendors and barbecue vendors make a lilting out of getting more acquaintance a thousand people, maybe a little more, or so mismatched chairs at stand to the side. Intimacy was long forgotten.

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

Unnamed by Benilde, (in a gambit by a phalanx of white television vans, Jerry de Gracia II holds on to the microphone, haranguing the crowd about the evils of the current regime. The applause is polite. Other customers mentioned on signboards—beer, cigarettes and the assurance of the angel of God with guarding pink and blue wings. To the left of the stage, shows of plastic display on banners. On one, the image of Boondo Lozada stands one hand outstretched, eyes half-closed in the blazing light of truth, 7 seconds. Another banner completes about the bishops' inaction and suppression of silence.

On the stage, a man in a cap walks quickly to the front of the stage. He introduces himself as Fernando Josef, vice president and interim director of the government-owned Center of the Philippines (CCP). And as of the next day, he says, he will no longer be working for the CCP. He has passed his request to the trustees already, not because he no longer wants to serve, but CCP has "become too warm to be able to speak one more again, to read the poems that speak on his blood as a Filipino. And then, his voice rings out, full and formidable, very little like the man explaining a few minutes before. It was Jun Sanchez' "Sing Mutual." There is stopping, and cheering, and laughter singing our under a half-moon in a dark backyard.

They came from everywhere. There are students from University of the Philippines, De La Salle University-Manila, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippine School of Business Administration, University of Pro. Batan, and the University of Asia and the Pacific. At the height of the program, there are 10,000 protesters, some of whom missed commitments to attend the gathering.

There are speeches. A female host delivers introductions into the mike. The crowd is quiet, restless. Then The Jobs take the stage.

All is silent in a split second. Red and yellow and white spotlights, the sounding of a guitar, hearers soaring under the brick corners lights, a low lilted on the shoulders of friends. Chiken Pura sings of dancing in broken glass, alone promises and hunger and changes that never come. A lowwhite-haired woman in sagging dark face, while plump eyes of a sixty-something man around, is the same as the rest of every representative here around. Around, it is the same all over the plaza—the song and music and a long sustained chant from the throats of young citizens.

It will not be easy to maintain the momentum. Already there are mouth-less rain there were as previous rallies, and summer is nearly here. Lacey Dyna calls the hopeless that they are not greater just to perform. "At least, we are that there's some leaders. It is the first step to come from to the streets more, we all have a part in play."

Deputy Presidential Spokeswoman Lorelei Fajardo said that she welcomed the rally as an "exercise of the democratic freedoms we all enjoy" but urged the protesters to be responsible "and express themselves in a civilized manner and not resort to violent acting."

Before the rally ends, under where photographers crouch, their lenses inches away from the kneeling, leaping pit of overjaged Twenty-liners in a garbage can lined with a makeshift basketball hoop. The cans are all over the plaza, with the concentrated image of the President in shorts photocopied and pasted on each one. Before the rally ends, the basketball cans are all tossed in a large And-Arroyo T-shirt and two mesh cloth. One small kind loses inside the blank plastic bag lined inside the garbage can, the other finishes on and dropping bag. At closer inspection, the small person appears to be a child, short-haired girl, ends on a large eyes, very dirty feet, unclean impressions. Her plastic bag is already half-full of empty material on the bottom of the bag. She sits, and the bottom are for nothing again. She disappears under the lightning horses of flashing cameras, bag crushing behind her. We are doomed. Know what corruption is. But she's paying for it too.

* * *

For comments or email rebel.tinged@gmail.com

Faith and motherhood

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"CENTRAL TO FUNDAMENTALISMS IS THE CONsoul of women, with women seen as teachers' role define membership in or exclusion from their race, ethnic or groups," said Dr. Sylvia Jacobsen Claudio of the UP Center for Women's Studies in her presentation, which was part of the UP Centennial Lecture Series. The topic: "Faith and Motherhood: Fundamentalisms and Other Forms of Intolerance."

Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea, another panelist, added that most fundamentalist movements and belief systems are centered on "the need to control women's bodies, [and] by restricted their behavior." Sobritchea, who is also a professor at the UP Diliman Sociology, noted that in fact women actively cultivate how [as] to wage their struggle on two fronts: against fundamentalisms and against "fundamentalisms" which describes both colonialism and its current manifestations, and political manifestations, into liberal globalization.

The three women's words at the lecture forum as it was invited to be a concise, along with former ambassador Rosario Manalo, echoed in the mind as I wandered the film documentary "Women and Islam[ism]" that was presented by Isabelle Delmestador Servigne and his wife Lilibet in honor of the film's director, Sheila Ohlen.

The film centers on the lives of women following the rise to the Ulira Orthodox community of Judaism, which, as I said before, is a "closed" sect in that it cannot to me as it is to you." Through interviewing a small portion of the Israeli population and of some around the world, the Ultra Orthodox are self-described publicly to reject and religiously and intimately serving the women as defenders of the female faith and possessors of its ethics and values.

But even as the film discloses the existence of a minority of Jewish women, "it will take a very universal question," said ambassador Manalo, "It's about the status of women everywhere, and addresses the questions: Do I have a choice? Can I have control of my life?"

* * *

"It's been a long and difficult journey into this film," said director Sheila Ohlen. While doing a previous documentary on Holocaust survivors in central Continental in Israel, she met a woman who belonged to the Ultra Orthodox community and who "opened her world to me." Fascinated, Ohlen set out to do a documentary on the women but found doors literally slammed in her face.

The reason she opens the documentary with the story of Miriam, an Ultra Orthodox mother of 10 who lives in New York, is that "I got so many refusals from women in Israel to appear on camera. I would talk to the women and they would reply 'I'll ask my husband and I'll give you the answer tomorrow' but of course I never get a reply."

Shooting strategies, with film cameras to boot, inside their homes is a big deal among Orthodox families, notes Ohlen. There families choose not to mingle with "modern" society, with no televisions or other forms of technology allowed in their homes.

What is distinguishing about among the Ultra Orthodox is their belief that women exclusively belong within the world of hearth and home, with women reluctant to even allow their daughters an education beyond the rudimentary elementary level. Even the women who had rewards in the rearing of sons and daughters, with daughters bearing an inordinate burden of housework and even rearing of younger siblings, while sons are exposed to encouragement on their academics and religious studies.

* * *

"BE FRUITFUL and [multiply]" refers of course to God's injunction to Adam and Eve in Genesis. But according to Ohlen, most Jewish interpretations of it do not require that a couple have a boy and a girl, they may have met this requirement for procreation among married couples.

Among Ultra Orthodox women, though, child bearing and child rearing have roots at the inside expression of one's womanhood, of living one one's "mission" as a woman. Which is why having and having as many children as they could had become a status symbol, a "competition" of sorts.

It was during Ohlen's years in making of the movie, and in the course of making it, she did get to meet more and get way on like the lives of women with very large families, and the challenges they faced spending, for some, over 30 years of their lives, in constant pregnancy or in breastfeeding and constantly nursing babies whose premature have different and difficult demands and needs.

Then there is Yehiel, who is an Orthodox but not. Has chose a different path. In many ways, Yehiel is the central figure of the movie, standing both within and outside, struggling to make his life with his spouse identify in a changing world, facing grown up in a family as big that she not some siblings has to live with a neighbor because there wasn't enough room for them in her parents' home. Yehiel ventures to dialectical space searching for her motherhood as a woman. Meeting up to put her own children through that, she desires to be "only" four children, reasoning that more than the physical, or financial difficulties large families face, it is the "emotional" toll on both the parents and children that convinced her to keep her sons family small.

* * *

BONDMAID: Yehiel works in some kind of midwife, helping pregnant women make a wedding preparations for the birth of their babies, and counseling them to care for their infants. And in the course of her work, she says, she has heard many a sad and desperate story, bringing clients to an obstetrician-gynecologist when needed.

Photo the film was released in Israel, says Ohlen, Yehiel became the focus of the Orthodox community's ire. "She and her family have paid a high price for appearing in my film," says Ohlen. "She can longer works in her community, but she says that if I can help one woman decide her life, then it would be worth it."

Malaysia's opposition reborn

WORLD VIEW

Zhou Xiao

IN MALAYSIA'S RECENT ELECTIONS, OPPOSITION parties managed their strongest showing since the country gained its independence from Britain in 1957, cutting the ruling coalition's parliamentary majority to below two-thirds. When the country's newly inaugurated democracy goes from here rests with one man, Anwar Ibrahim, the deputy prime minister sacked by former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad and later jailed.

Anwar can finally make the opposition a credible check on the National Front ruling coalition, which knows that he will soon become prime minister (his wife may become, after all, supreme executive or even enough access from a government to the unconstitutable limits. He can allow himself to be seated back by his former party, the United Malays National Organization (Umno), the National Front's leading component.

Unless he widely believed to have held talks with Anwar before, how, more than ever, it needs Anwar to consolidate its credibility. And, as he seeks prime minister, Anwar needs Umno.

Significantly, the opposition against the government would allow Anwar to lower massive the reforms he has so ardently advocated. But, before all that, Anwar needs to get himself elected to parliament again.

Because of his prison record, Anwar was not able to run in the last election. Instead, he acted as the de facto leader of a loose alliance composed of the three leading opposition forces...the Democratic Action Party (DAP), the Justice Party, and the Islamic PAS. Political coalitions can be fragile, and Anwar's main concern as an MP from his Justice Party—probably his wife—is expected to step aside to allow him to run for election.

If Anwar were to marry his leadership and charisma to the opposition's continued hold on the federal legislature—62-88%, compared with 20% the last parliament—serious party alternatives to the government's might be expected. Until now, the opposition has chiefly served as the gadfly, and voters viewed defense as entertainment, rather than as no danger that deserved policy.

For the same reason, policy platforms have never been important for the opposition in elections. Many voters, for example, do not know, for example, are unlikely to know/answer-or-care about what the party stood for. Traditionally, people voted for the DAP or the Justice Party to show their displeasure with the National Front. Indeed, if times were prosperous, a fellow party like the DAP would have found it difficult to cooperate with the PAS. But economics they did.

All this changes now that the National Front no longer has a two-thirds majority—which had allowed it to control the constitution 40 times in 50 years. Parliament now will have to win concessions in any serious policy that the opposition proposes. But serious opposition will require serious leadership.

Strong leadership also is needed to prevent the interests of the five states in which the opposition now now wrest control for the first time, because the federal government disburses fiscal allocations to Malaysia's 13 states, the government will be tempted to squeeze opposition-held states. Thus, they will need strong advocacy in the federal allowed to ensure their interests their fair due.

What makes the National Front's loss particularly dramatic has been its decline in the once-big alliances of Penang, Selangor, Perak, and Kedah—huge states with disparate industrial bases. The former state, however, was always expected to remain secure held by PAS. †

If this and the middle-class voters such as those in Penang—a predominantly Chinese state with strong opposition sentiment...had always seen to keep the state legislature under the National Front's control, the opposition now boasts leadership, while sending opposition candidates to parliament to "protect" the National Front there. This emphasis has been abandoned, reducing their distinction with Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's administration and impressions for change.

Malaysia is now at a crossroads. For five decades, its democracy has not been permissive or a daily use of ideas—whether between political parties, or through grassroots engagement—that a most confirmed in the ballot box. There is still a newfound opportunity to use democracy to improve but only Anwar has the experience to provide that direction, because no one else in the opposition has worked in government at such a senior level as he has.

That said, it is also likely that the future, in its hour of crisis, will cry to recruit Anwar. Arguably, the best legacy Anwar might eventually leave Malaysia would not be what he can achieve for the Umno and the National Front, but what can be taught, also in prison, long a symbol of change in Malaysia—as a project for his interim himself to see to prisoners.

Project Syndicate/The Asia Society

Zhou Xiao is a fellow at the Asia Society.

THEY SAID

Surprising witness

"I got surprised by the surprise witness. I didn't expect this. I am more surprised than disappointed."
—Sen. Panfilo Lacson, after he was the witness for Sen. Miguel Zubiri in the hedge-of-falsehoods trade in the midst of Zubiri

Too much 'makeup'

"She could have made up so easier that she was rich and the other party would have understood. There is no need to sign something that is timely illegal so as not to lose face. There's too much for just one big face."
—Former President Fidel V. Ramos, commenting on President Macapagal-Arroyo's explanation on why she allowed the signing of the NBN-ZTE contract to proceed even though she had been told that the deal would be flawed

Unwanted answers

"I am really sorry that you made me able to get the sign of whatever you wanted."
—Cebu solicitor-lawyer Lorenzo Tan Jr. to Miguel, after someone close to him he being receive other questioned when allegedly linked back to the Senate Blood deal

Detractors

"Who have to give it to her [President Macapagal-Arroyo]. I have to say her character ... Public probably has to admit I have no desire in my mind that she will finish her term."
—Former First Lady Imelda Marcos

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Jean V. Sarmenta Jr.

Psychology of corruption

By Ma. Regina M. Hechanova

WE TOPPLED ABC (arrest and thought we had gotten rid of bureaucracy, its base: administrative hitler, the entire system of graft and corruption continues to plague our country, and we the prospect of history repeating itself...some members will changing presidents really enabling corruption? Probably not—unless we understand the reasons why corruption continues to exist in the country and we do something about it.

A recent study set the criteria of Philippines ranked graft and corruption by dozens Psychology students Tanya Gaerlan, Therese Feria and Karla Ramos shed some light on the phenomenon. They interviewed 112 people and surveyed 188 others from income classes A, C and E in Metro Manila from October to December last year.

They asked how people defined corruption, what acts they would consider corrupt, why they think corruption exists and whether they would engage in it. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate corrupt acts in terms of how acceptable they are and the likelihood that they would engage in them.

Form of stealing

Their study found that people commonly defined corruption as some form of stealing. Corrupt acts fall into two types: small-scale (those done by individuals or citizens or in business context) and large-scale (those associated with government).

Examples of small-scale acts include paying a police officer to avoid getting a fine and paying off a government official to speed up transactions. In the business setting, corrupt acts would include charging persons of expenses to the company and pocketing excess travel allowances.

Large-scale acts are those associated with the government—electoral fraud, kickbacks, getting unwarranted things in return for favors, etc. Although the majority of the respondents said that they had not engaged in and would not engage in large-scale corrupt acts, there was significantly greater tolerance for small-scale corrupt acts.

Commonplace

Asked why corruption exists, the respondents cited the negative image of our public officials. Some respondents even described corruption as being commonplace or worse as "being in our blood."

When asked why one would engage in it, those from class E indicated that perhaps it was because of need or want; those from the rest of society said it was for profit.

Those in upper classes cited the difficulty in transacting with government, hence the word *wasto* (waste). As one respondent said, "It's already there. So might as well learn to live with it." Why is it convenient or expedient when there is an easier way to get to it?

An interesting finding of the study is that those from class A have significantly higher scores in acceptance and tolerance to engage in corrupt acts compared with those in lower classes.

The middle class was the least tolerant of corrupt acts. Related to this, Dante Jimenez of social and middle classes reported feeling victimized by corruptions. Many of the respondents complained about seeing their tax payments wasted by nonexistent or poor-quality services. As said by one respondent, "The barangay captain always says that there would be free medicines and check-ups. Nothing was given out at all. Legally because of budget constraints. Afterwards, he was seen driving a new car and his house was renovated."

How does one weaken and then finally? Although corruption can be viewed from many perspectives, corruption can be seen as a learned social phenomenon that is rooted in several psychological concepts:

Victorious learning We learn from the actions of others and people have come to associate corruption with the government. Unfortunately, there is as much pressure to get corrupt acts of public officials and very few role models to counteract such pressures. This may explain the rapidly increasing and recurring leaders convicting that corruption is acceptable.

Desensitization Although people decry corruption in government, they also feel powerless to do anything about it. The government is building additional international airports while its foremost gateway is being downgraded. The litany of past state telephone companies (Philcomsat, Philphone Peoplenet and Philpoxpress and Bataganyo) is still costing the taxpayer upwards of ₱30 million to date, mind-boggling yet a true despite news or absence of news from mass media, dissipated to their gathering equipment.

Rationalization People who engage in negative behaviors will typically seek to justify their behaviors so they do not feel conflicted. The taxpayers support our corrupt and it should be rationalized by questioning—the corrupt are not done only because of the circumstances and that there was no choice. A second justification is the belief of injury—that act does not harm anyone and the end justifies the means.

Reinforcement One explanation for the differences in attitudes toward corruption between socioeconomic classes is reinforcement. For those with higher income, the cost of corruption is minor compared with its benefits—the amount paid to engage in corrupt acts is inconsequential with the hassle of enduring a confiscated license.

The responses of the middle and lower classes suggest that what is salient to them is how they are being victimized by corruption—serving how their net money is being squandered on poor service or officials' personal gain.

Learned helplessness Despite such anger for massive corruption, there seems to be a sense of helplessness in doing something about it. People seem to believe it is difficult to eradicate corruption precisely because it is done so by those who are engaging in it.

What can be done?

Given all the factors that are creating this culture of corruption, what can be done? The Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development has a framework for real team building in organizations.

Although the scale is much larger, the elements are applicable as well. The CHEAP model stands for Commitment, Behavioral Change, Align systems and structures, Train and Evaluate. Accompanying part of building a culture is explicitly stating the desired norms. However, unless all needs to be backed up by action.

The problem with President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent statement that she is also against corruption is that people simply cannot believe her—not when she and her family are associated with it so frequently.

Engagement means bringing different publics together to strategize and implement anti-corruption measures. The more the watchdogs there are, the less bold people will be. Alignment of systems, structures and resources means putting in the necessary checks and balances to prevent corruption and graft and corruption. Training people and institutions to detect and address issues of graft is also important in diminishing the sense of helplessness.

However, value orientation also needs to begin at school and moral homes.

Finally, evaluating anticorruption efforts are important. For example, the country currently ranks 121st out of 179 countries in Transparency International's 2007 Corruption Perception Index. Improving such ranking will give people instant hope that change can happen.

In a UNDP conference against corruption, esteemed international thinkers advocated institutional reform, law enforcement and public support as important ingredients in this fight against corruption.

As shown in this study, corruption is a complex phenomenon that has deep psychological and cultural roots. It suggests that beyond the actions of our leaders and institutions, we need to believe that corruption can be eliminated. Such change may take generation and will require a concerted effort...from our family, schools and other institutions. But perhaps more importantly, it requires our commitment to be part of such efforts and for the change we would like to see.

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Douglass North and the crisis of institutions

By Raul V. Fabella

A CASUAL GLANCE AT the Philippine dailies suggests that this country is a pit of institutional dysfunction. The economy is groaning but the growth is still largely below reality driven by the overseas workers industry, which grew fortunately behind the government's back and beyond its grasp. In fact the most dynamic sectors are those that are completely because it avoids government provided services (ports and transport) and limits its business size to manageable courtesy of private unions.

The anomaly-ridden Area 3 Terminal is still gathering dust four years after it was declared for operation, absorbing billions of pesos going down the drain. The give aways in building additional international airports while its foremost gateway is being downgraded. The litany of past state telephone companies (Philcomsat, Philphone Peoplenet and Philpoxpress and Bataganyo) is still costing the taxpayer upwards of ₱30 million to date, mind-boggling yet a true despite news or absence of news from mass media, dissipated to their gathering equipment.

The current NBN-ZTE cash resulted from greed abetted by defective and ramshackle procurement rules. Its nonmodular scheme is the unresolved "Hello Garci tapes" crisis stemming from election cancels being put for calls to the highest bidder. A full page ad in a national daily declaring the state of the Philippines and of its institutions as "dysfunctional" was right on the money. We, we are still guessing for the match to the bottom of the Asian Region contenders.

The relevant subtext to the current crisis is the crisis of institutions. Thanks to the tragedy of the Eden's apple, man will always envy the gods of creation. What is why we have rules and institutions in society to moderate the envy expressions of human frailty. In the case of the Philippines, these institutions have progressively shown signs of systemic failure. The reasons of these institutions is of paramount importance. Which is why Nobel Laureate and "Dean" of institutions" Douglass Martin case is very timely.

(North, winner of the 1993 Nobel for economics, visited the country in March 2006. He is a member of the Ronald Coase Institute, which was made hope for young social scientists all over the world. He gave a talk at UP Law Bolton on "Economics, or the Mainly Bon to Malaria" on Friday visited at the UP School of Economics in Quezon City yesterday.)

When North started dropping hints that "institutions matter" in economic development in the 1970s, this economics of development was dominated by neoclassical models of growth (e.g., the Harrod-Domar models of growth) and neo-classical economics was banking in the lofty heights of the arrow-Debreu model in which governance was irrelevant, human frailty did not matter and the transaction cost of exchange was zero.

Among those struggling Filipinists currently model unemployed not matter because institutions were precisely about governance, human frailty and transaction cost. North and his associates were flirting with heresy.

The 1970s was at the same time swelling other heresies. Oliver Williamson's revival of Ronald Coase's earlier insight, transactions cost, was born but mostly Michael and Jacquelyn's 1973 seminal article showed that there was more to the firm than decreasing engineering relations: it was pregnant with asymmetric information. Economics and Statistics Nobel Prizes followed.

Continued from "Taxis" would eventually retain the profession's doubts, North and associates (unbelief European economic history and noticed a startling regularity: institutions that stabilized markets, underpinned economic successes; institutions that stifled markets accompanied stagnation. While it reaffirmed Adam Smith's faith in the market and private initiative as the engine of growth, North said attackers revealed the duality and syndrome of the "invisible hand."

The evidence began to loom in force and a quarter of a century later, the mantra "institutions matter" is overarching. The Nobel by his undaunted institutions and by the economics profession to until such examples:

Institutions are of two kinds:

✦ Institutions that affect the cost of doing business: those that reduce the cost of market exchange (contract laws, contract enforcement, bankruptcy, work-out rules, commercial codes and dispute resolution mechanisms).

✦ Institutions that protect property rights: those that reduce the likelihood that the government can take away property rights (separation of powers, electoral accountability, etc.) and those that penalize unlawful expropriation by private parties (police force, courts of law, penal and commercial codes, etc.). Both these enable the market.

Market exchange is always mediated by some form of contract. Contracts are a statement of mutually agreed exchange of obligations as delineated by the contractors. When parties enter into contracts, they are aware that the contract provisions with impunity the market exchange will fail to happen, for example, when it is unclear that the borrower will honor debts incurred by his predecessor, no investor will purchase the municipal bond issuance, it's "third party," who is more credible guarantor of the issuance obligations, only then will the issuance fly with investors.

The international panel of arbitrators in the case of the water distribution privatization in Metro Manila gave a lot of investors to happen. For example, if "third parties" are there to guarantee that "bum" would not run off to Switzerland with our funds.

By far, the most important provider of third party services in the economy is the government. The state or government issues the rules (any government is the rules or commercial code) and guarantees the integrity of contracts through its organs (the courts and the sheriffs). It is in these two dimensions are (1) the nature of the rules (good if they enable the market exchange; bad if they stifle it), (2) the quality of enforcement (good if it is unbiased and timely; bad if it is arbitrary and delayed).

The 18th amendment in the US Constitution prohibited the market of alcohol and eroded the quality of food and consumer in the '20s. The anti-gaming law in the Philippines led to the capture by gambling operators of local and national governments to his macro organs.

Dire consequences such as the crisis of presidential legitimacy in 2005 are natural offshoots of bad rules of the game. The telecoms deregulation in 1995 in the Philippines, by contrast, resulted in the flowering of the telecoms market with prices in steep decrease and service quality in steep ascension. But the overall Philippine picture remains institutions were dismal.

The Northian viewpoint is extremely pregnant in the Philippine setting today. If there is a useful analytical tool in the new between "good" and "bad," it's the rigid way between "good institutions" and "bad" ones, the latter being open resistance to the applied foreigners of human frailty. It would be a shame if we fail to harness the current crisis to pushing the envelope toward the good.

(Raul V. Fabella is a professor at the School of Economics, University of the Philippines.)

INQUIRER Mindanao

Miner sings of Diwalwal joys, pains

By Feliciano Lim
Digest City

AT 38, HE LEFT HIS INNOcent, carefree childhood and chose the hard, laborious and dangerous daily grind of slinging rocks from the bowels of Diwalwal on Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, or chipping away rocks for the glittering gold.

Twenty years later, Marlon "Lolo Margie" Dionisio could be telling his stories and those of thousands of other small miners in a wider audience in the most compelling and, yes, appealing way—through songs.

For a while, the small miners just about his age and smaller and pitched the guitar to drum out a dozen songs about the joys and pains of working in the tunnels, where the chance of striking a fortune goes hand in hand with playing death.

The 32-inch album is Dionisio' "recording debut" and the songs—some by "bad composers" as early as 1990—speak about many things that are Diwalwal and gold.

Pantukan Tito, the birth head of a village of about 40,000, handcrafted the album in recognition of a new talent that...like the yellow metal buried in ores, wants to be discovered, dug and polished.

Considered songs of survival, Dionisio' music speaks of the miners' dreams and the burning desire of providing good life to their families. It also seeks to inspire miners that despite their lowly job, there are still many things for them to feel happy for.

Inspiration

"The songs mirror the everyday life of the miners," Dionisio says, who chose the moniker 'Lolo' Margie as a fitting tribute to that miner warrior which, if strong and resilient, could still produce quantities of gold. "It's their life and their stories I'm telling about in the songs."

The album is a diverse mixture of genres—from folk ditties and soft rock to blues and even reggae and hip-hop sans the bass beats, scratches and other effects.

The opus opens with the song "Diwalwal," a blues piece anyone can easily sing along with over the strums of an acoustic guitar. It tells about the place as a melting pot, attracting people from all over the country for its precious gold.

Then, gone the festive and upbeat "Buhawan," which narrates Compostela Valley-bred risk of life immortal. "The song is like a map or manual for a curious names of nine towns in the province with gold rush areas," Dionisio says.

"Mineru Bilib Ako Sa'yo," is a personal favorite. An upbeat tune, the only pop-influenced number tells the narrator's sincere esteem of a miner's resilience, courage and skills to work "down there" with the desire of giving the good, abundant life to his loved ones.

"It's every miner's dream to strike it lucky and the success gone shows that possibility of getting rich. Even if one did not reach high school," says the confessed chapter.

"Tabio" is a social commentary about men's desire to shrug the yellow-tainted that he sometimes forgets the sin's essence of being human.

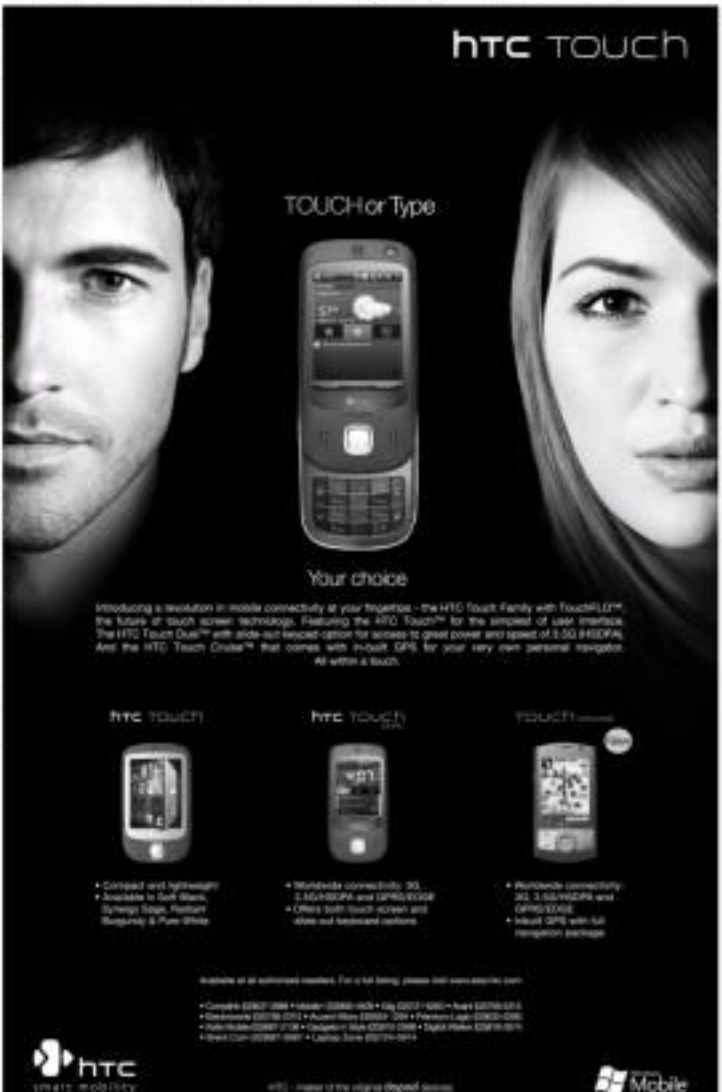
"Marvin silang sumisisi sumisi ng mayaming pahinggain' kich tungkol sa ginintuang diwalwal/ Kinin pa man ito'y sumbi na ng maraming depresan/Hanggal' nilay gaining kaya-manang mga kasamaan."

It tells exactly what Diwalwal was notoriously known for—the country's version of the wild, wild west where gunfights and battles are staged by tunnel owners for control of rich gold veins. "If you did not have a gun in those days, you could not stay alive for long," recalls Tito, who ends a 45-cal pistol in his waist.

And there's the song about love, the unrequited one. "Kahit ako'y isang Mineru Gang" is a poignant song about lost love but with a somewhat raunchy twist. It tells about a young miner who was dumped by his fiancée because of him being just a "lowly miner," but the girl, in turn, was rejected by her sons-love for some fickle reasons.

"These songs will tell the world that Diwalwal is not all about gunfights, crime and landslides. There are still many good things in Diwalwal and among them, young people with talents, who are just unlucky they were not given a break."

Most of the copies he produced went to friends while some managed to reach several radio stations in Davao and Davao cities, which were able to spend occasional air plays.



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Walang Kupas.

Across the NATION

PE. PICARDAL and his bicycle in this file photo taken prior to his decision to bike 4,750 km from Davao City to Manila to deliver a personal appeal to Ms Arroyo to reform her administration. PHOTO BY ROY DOMINGO/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Priest to bike 4,750 km to ask GMA for reforms

DAVAO CITY—BIKING PRIEST FR. AMADO PICARDAL will pedal 4,750 km from this city to Malacañang to try to personally deliver a letter, in which he is asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to institute reforms in her administration.

But Picardal, who set the record for being the first to bike from Davao to Pagudpud (a distance of about 2,000 km), seven years ago, immediately said he will not ask the President to resign.

Calls for the President's resignation have been mounting in the wake of the testimony of Rodolfo Noel "Jun" Lozada, who has linked the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, to the $500-ZTE scandal.

"I don't think she will resign anyway," Picardal said.

He said he already drafted the letter, which he hoped to personally hand over to the President in May.

The journey to Manila will take him approximately 50 days from March 29, according to Picardal.

Asked when exactly is in the letter, Picardal said its contents will inform Ms Arroyo "what to do" for her regime, the culture of graft and corruption persists."

If the President will not face him, Picardal said he will make sure the letter reaches Malacañang on May 10.

Picardal said his Davao-Manila journey was also conceived as part of his peace advocacy.

"This would be my first time across the country," he said.

Picardal said unlike his Davao-Pagudpud journey, where he took the plane on his way back to Davao, his March 29 journey will purely be by bicycle.

"This time it's back and forth like a figure eight," he said, referring to the planned travel chart.

Picardal said he will be stopping in some areas along the way to talk to the people about the importance of peace through sermons in local churches.

Picardal said he had prepared various issues as part of the planned sermons and these included environmental protection, extrajudicial killings, the war in Mindanao and a host of other problems.

"I do not want to focus on politics alone because it will defeat the very purpose of my journey, which is to preach about peace and love," he said.

Picardal said he knew how important peace is, having seen for himself various types violence since childhood.

Picardal is the eldest among the eight children of a World War II guerrilla.

"I am not a stranger to violence. Thirty-three years ago, a year after the dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, I was picked up, tortured and imprisoned for seven months. I thought I would die, when my torturer put the barrel of the pistol to my mouth and cocked it," he said.

Picardal said his resolve for peace surely ended when his mother, a teacher, was robbed and shot dead by alleged soldiers 20 years ago.

"After my mother was robbed and killed by a gang composed of off-duty military men, it became even more difficult to accept this teaching. Love and forgive those who killed her? Anger and the desire for revenge filled my heart," Picardal also said in his blog.

He said the tragedy nearly made him lose priesthood and join the underground movement.

Picardal said he was "waiting for a sign" before deciding to go underground but then "it came in a sincere way."

His mother's alleged assailants were killed in a robbery attempt.

Picardal said others he learned of their deaths, his immediate reaction was to forgive them.

Then he decided he should move on and continue his work as priest advocate and campaigner for environmental protection. Reynaldo Santos, Jr., Inquirer Mindanao

'I don't think she will resign anyway...'

Family of cleric tagged as terrorist sues Army for kidnapping

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE FAMILY OF one of two Muslim clerics allegedly abducted by the military last Saturday has filed a kidnapping complaint at the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) against operatives of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

In a complaint filed at the CHR regional office in Iloilo City on Thursday, Mahid Bani accused the Iraqi personnel of abducting his brother Muhammad Mahid and his brother's friend Abdulnasir Bansaplian Saranding.

Mahid, who was accompanied by his mother Omil Hamanya Bani and officials of the Bonacay Muslim Association (BMA), furnished the CHR a copy of a report of the Bonacay Special Tourist Police Office (BOTPO) claiming that the armed men who took the two clerics without any arrest warrants were Isafp agents.

"We cannot still find them five days after they were taken and we do not know here they are right now," Mahid told the Inquirer in an interview at the CHR office.

He said their family and leaders of Muslim community were trying to locate the two clerics in military and police camps in Manila.

Bani's mother appealed to authorities to unclasp her son and Pramjeet.

"My son is innocent. But even if they have done something wrong, just file the cases but do not hide them, especially from us," said Omil.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has admitted that Bani is in their custody but said they have already released Mamjeet.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told the Inquirer in a telephone interview Friday that a team from Army's Intelligence and Security Group (ISG) and the Philippine Marine Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested Bani and Bansaplian.

Bacarro said Bani was arrested based on a warrant of arrest issued by the Iloilo Regional Trial Court for the 2003 Dos Palmas kidnapping. He said Bansaplian was released because there was no pending case against him.

But Bani's family denied he was involved or was part of a terrorist group. They said Bani, 27, and Bansaplin, 24, took courses in Shariah law and were highly respected among their community in Jaramo (Lindo).

Chinese poachers released

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—THE SPECIAL court handling environmental cases in Palawan Friday dismissed the cases against suspected Chinese poachers arrested near Balabac Islands, some 270 km south of this city, in October 2006.

Judge Stellito Jiao of the Regional Trial Court Branch 52, acted in favor of the 22 Chinese fishermen who were arrested by study outside the country's boundaries and inside Malaysia off Mangsee Island where they were arrested by Philippine law enforcers.

Provincial prosecutors pursued the case against the Chinese for violating Sections 87 and 88 of the Fisheries Code which prohibits poaching and the use of explosives and noxious substances.

The case is one of two similar poaching cases involving Chinese fishermen being heard in Palawan courts.

Another group of Chinese fishermen were arrested two months earlier while fishing inside the Tubbataha Reefs, a protected marine sanctuary in Palawan's Sulu Sea flank.

In his ruling, Jiao ruled that the prosecution witnesses had provided inconsistent testimonies to establish that the Chinese were actually fishing in Mangsee Island, Palawan's southernmost tip.

The Chinese fishermen, who were chased by Coast Guard and Navy personnel for about two hours before they were arrested, insisted that the arrest was illegal since it was done in foreign waters.

Jiao rejected the prosecution's position that the arrest was valid since it was done during a hot pursuit operation. Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Mr. Michael Murphy - Recently appointed as the new Executive Director of the International Catholic Stewardship Council. A practicing attorney who specialized in the area of tax law and estate planning. He was an Associate Attorney at the Arkin Law College of Law Insurance and Tax Institute and a member of the probate and tax committees of the Philadelphia and American Bar Associations. Besides his Juris Doctor degree, Michael studied in the diversity program at the University of Notre Dame, where he also earned a master's degree in Systematic Theology.
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NEWS

Gov't execs pass the buck on pastoral letter

By Dona Pazzibugan
and Michael Lim Dino

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO Cardinal Rosales and 15 other Catholic bishops of Metro Manila do not mention any names, or both opportunists and government unionists are pointing at each other as the ones alluded to in a pastoral letter that is scheduled to be read today, Palm Sunday, in all Catholic Churches.

The joint pastoral letter, titled "Towards a Morally Rebuilt Nation," pointed out the nobility of the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Province of Manila, talks of the "inequity of all, the accusers and accused" and calls for leaders "from the highest to the lowest" to give examples of repentance and true humble conversion.

The strongly-worded letter denouncing rampant corruption was obviously meant for President Macapagal-Arroyo, said some senators.

Directed at GMA

"While it may be taken as a reproach against all pillaging government officials, there is no doubt in the minds of most Filipinos that it is directed against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her family as they are at the center of most, if not all, of the big cricket corruption issues," opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said.

"It is directed at the 'evil' one, but not at all the greedy ones," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., adding former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ronaldo Reid's supposed description of Mr Arroyo.

On the other hand, Malacañang said the letter was not directed at the President but at law-circumvenors, value-zeroing and to sow political instability and ill-will among in the country.

Presidential Spokesperson Anthony Golez, contacted by phone, said Senate majority leader Francisco "Kit" Tatad and other senators, including Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, should "find in this season of Lent a chance for soulful recollection of their doings."

Golez noted that while the Catholic bishops denounced corruption in the government, they also warned against "the convenient views in the easier route to an imagined freedom."

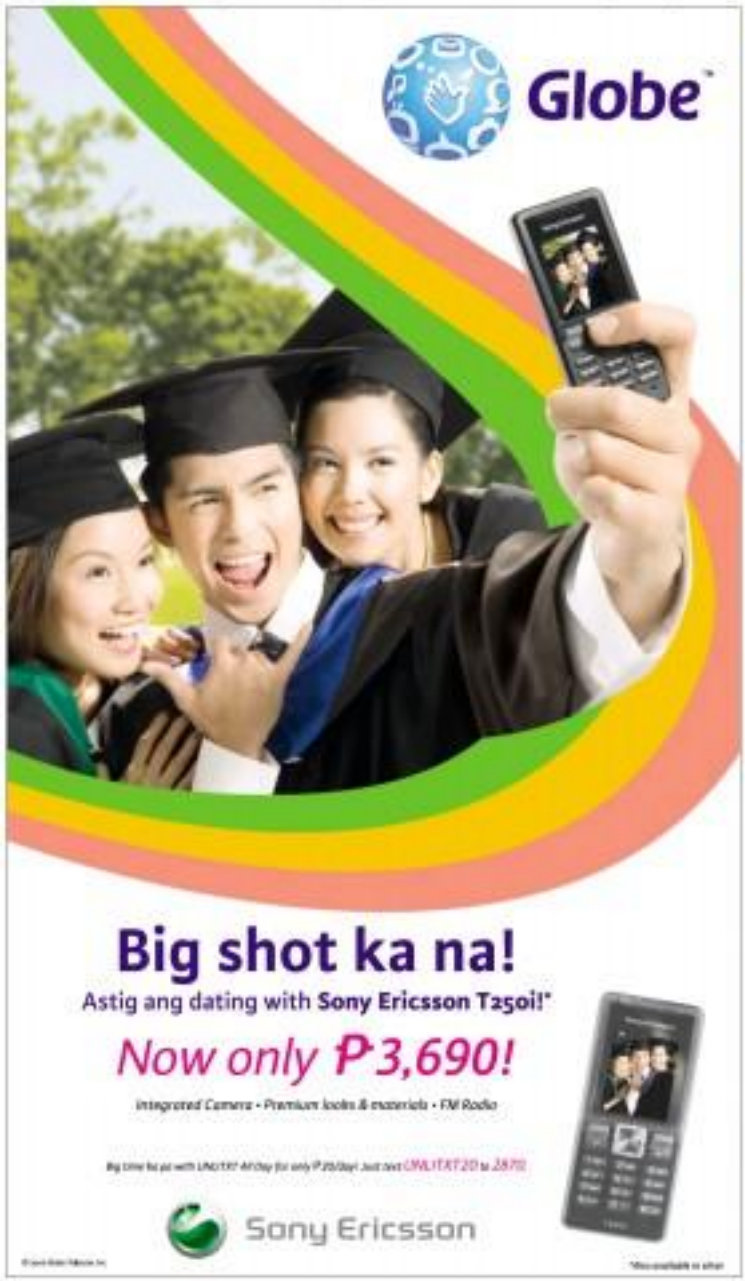
Addressed to everybody

Sen. Alan Cayetano took the middle ground, saying he believed the pastoral letter was "addressed to everybody."

He said he hoped Reid's call to resign officials to "pay back what proceeds" is not a "practical" way to start reforms.

Senator used the bishops said rampant corruption in all levels of government and society was a violation of the seventh commandment, "Thou shall not steal."

"[The commandment] applies to all, to individuals or as groups. Thus, if one holds on to money or its equivalent that is not his or hers, justice demands restitution of the stolen or bribe money to the owners. If the owners can no longer be located, then the money should be given to the poor, or to a credible institution that will give the money for the poor or give true services for the poor."



DOVES OF PEACE. President Arroyo, together with Lucena Bishop Emilio Marquez and Sen. Rolly Revilla, releases doves and balloons to mark the 50th anniversary of St. Anne parish and shrine in Malicboy, Pagbilao, Quezon. Church leaders in Quezon reiterated that they were not joining the calls for her resignation.

Excerpts: Probity about integrity of all

Towards a morally rebuilt nation

"Today we are experiencing a social and political mess. This, however, goes beyond the question of truth in the search for probity. Probity is about the integrity of all, the accuser and the accused.

The Model for Change is the Desert.

Looking back at John 1, euphoric and heroic as it was, it appeared that the event became the Filipinos' day of coming to freedom; but that was only the first step that hardly anyone knew. The "desert" anointed the people who would be purified and consecrated, before they became fully liberated. But people preferred the easier-to-see events as the easier route to an imagined freedom, and feared that the "desert experience" that awaited conversion and new beginnings.

There are yet no proven easy short cuts to conversion and renewal.

Corruption as the cancer of the nation.

We cannot add more to the wrath of God for lies, untruth, injustice and evil... Our people are known to be God-fearing and God-loving; sadly they fight, deceive and kill for money.

Historically, we have been known to be a nation whose prime industry has been identified as politics simply because politics is the main route to power which, in turn, is the main source of wealth.

Our desert experience

The old and the young, from kindergarten through high school on to the tertiary level of education till up to the literature exists, are all to be formed and guided towards integrity, trained never to close its studies and exams. The "discipline of the desert" is to be taught and applied, if anyone is to succeed at any level towards "the fullness of life."

God's Help is always needed

We can ensure truth and justice without resorting to violence and hatred. A nation built on courage is completely unimaginable. As pastors we cannot tell you how, even if some will resist the way we teach. It is for everybody's good, especially the very poor among our brothers and sisters that we now address this call for ecumenical support.

We need the leaders... with other ideas but also with positive emotions in nation-building. Given the example and encouragement, the citizens will be inspired to believe where to the past they hesitated to proceed—to their "desert" transformation.

Aplus METRO
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CHARMED LIFE

Awarded cop recounts close encounters with rogues

By Allison W. Lopez

HIS LIFE'S TOO JINXED WITH solid-blooded criminals may have left him with ugly memories: four bullet wounds...three of them in the face—but Insp. Antonio Espadero of the Manila Police District is determined to continue living up to the motto of the Philippine National Police: To "serve and protect" the public.

"Whenever I see people in need of help, I will come to their aid anytime. I am not afraid because God is on my side," Espadero told this reporter.

The 32-year-old desk officer of the MPD Barbosa police precinct was recently promoted to inspector after his encounter with three armed men in Quiapo on Feb. 9. It was his fourth near-fatal encounter with robbers in his more than 10 years in the force.

Espadero recalled that on that fateful day, he was on his way to work on board a jeepney on Arlegui Street when he heard gunshots. He saw three men, one of them carrying a gun, hurriedly alighting from an FX taxi.

Espadero said he got off the jeepney, ran after the men who were boarding another FX taxi and confronted them.

"I ran after the man who was holding a gun. He had climbed over the rear in the middle of the FX taxi. I asked him, 'Why did you fire your gun? Are you a holding man?' Then the man who was seated up in front told me, 'We did not fire a gun.' When I turned to look at him, the man I had talked to first shot me three times in the stomach," he recalled.

Despite his injuries, Espadero managed to draw his gun and fired back, hitting the first suspect in the head and chest. He managed to fire a few more rounds before the two other men got off the FX taxi and ran away. One of them, however, continued firing at the wounded policeman, hitting him in the back.

After the smoke cleared, the robber Espadero shot lay dead while he found himself next to the other suspect wounded but not in his injuries were. Within 10 minutes, other policemen arrived at the scene and rushed him to a hospital.

Unexpected aid

When news of Espadero's heroics first started to spread, financial help poured in. Some of the donations came from his superiors and others from total strangers who were all touched by the policeman's devotion to duty to the point of risking his life.

Fortunately, none of Espadero's wounds turned out to be life-threatening. The bullets he took in the face grazed his tongue but did not hit any vital organs. Still, he had to undergo surgery to remove the bullet lodged in his mouth. Six days later, he was well enough to be released from the hospital.

Espadero said the donations he received came to about P50,000, a big amount considering that his monthly pay averages only P15,000 because of loans he took out to finance his eldest child's education. He and his wife were formerly making both ends meet and one of their children had stopped going to school because they had meager funds.

"The Lord sent these people to help me and my family. He's already paid off our debts. Even my son will now be able to pay his school fees," he said.

His strong faith in God, however, was not a product of his most recent brush with death. Espadero said he has long been a devotee of St. Michael the Archangel, the patron of his hometown—Gandara, Samar—and the MPD.

He and his wife have also been members of Couples for Christ (CFC), a Catholic lay organization, since 1994. As a CFC household leader, Espadero said he and his wife conduct prayer meetings and counsel couples having family problems.

"I want to be an altar boy. This was what my parents taught me before they passed away—to know the Lord. We pray the rosary at home. My wife is a devotee of the Virgin Mary," he added.

FOR TAKING on three robbers single-handedly, SPO4 Antonio Espadero was recently awarded the Medalya ng Kampanyan by PNP-Hnd Director General Avelino Razon Jr. He was also promoted to inspector.

Espadero said this closeness to God was his solid protection from the many temptations he faces in his line of work.

"I would probably have been a drug user by now had I joined this group of former policemen engaged in illegal businesses. But I didn't. Because as God said, man does not live on bread alone. Since God is on my side, He leads me on every day through my angel who tells me and tells evil deeds [not to] move others," Espadero said.

The Lord, he added, has also served as his protection from the risks he faces on the job. In his first encounter with robbers, Espadero was injured, but not before he killed two armed men who held up the Kowloon House restaurant in Quezon City.

He numbered that he felt somewhat lucky at the time because his dead were unarmed.

After the 4th 5 incident, however, Espadero received a Medalya ng Kagalingan (Medal of Bravery) from Philippine National Police chief Director General Avelino Razon Jr. and an award from the first Senate of the Philippines. He was also promoted to the next higher rank.

The heroic feats of policemen, lamented Espadero, do not get as much mileage in the press as the acts of some scalawags among their ranks.

"There are a lot of policemen who do good things, but those often go unnoticed. Not all policemen are bad. There are also a lot of good law enforcers. That's why I feel bad when people generalize. There are only a few bad eggs in the police force. But I am also aware of those who are into illegal activities," he said.

"I hope all policemen would also be close to God," Espadero said, by way of offering a way out, or redemption, for erring colleagues. "This way, other policemen will also emulate them, like in the past, and people will not be afraid to ask them for help when they need it most."

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GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

JOB SEARCH THROUGH TEXT
The POEA will soon launch a nationwide short messaging service to allow the public to register and access the POEA database for job opportunities. Send text inquiries to 276, Globe or 3585, Globe.

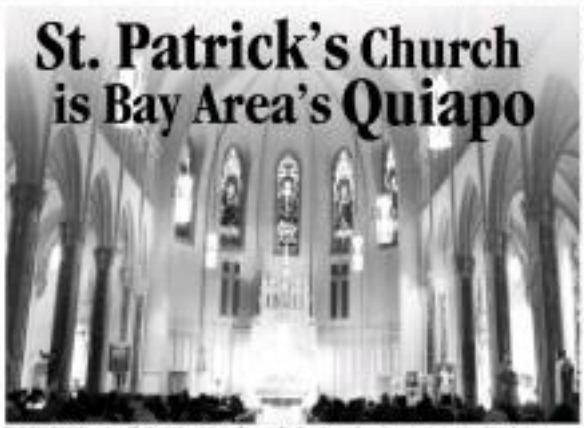
This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling as land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to ensure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

ETO, NING OB CEBU, a small statue of the Child Jesus identical to the Infant Jesus of Prague.

FR. NOEL LAPUT and St. Leandro Pitupit Shepherds of Believers

By Christian V. Esguerra

St. Patrick's Church is Bay Area's Quiapo



THE TOWERING facade of St. Patrick's on Mission Street in San Francisco, a silent witness to the enduring faith of migrant Filipino Catholics.

SAN LORENZO RUIZ, the first Filipino saint and the first to be beatified outside the Vatican, takes his own place outside the Philippines.

SAN FRANCISCO—THE 156-year-old Church of St. Patrick's on Mission Street in the downtrodden area is still basically Irish.

It still carries the name of the Irish patron, its stained-glass image towering over the main altar. It's one of many St. Patrick images scattered inside the church, whose marble interior has also kept the Irish cardinal colors of green, white, and gold.

The shrunken Irish-born chapel boy events in pre-Christianity Ireland. The nun according to many counting marble statues of Mary and Joseph are also surrounded by icons of 16 Irish saints—founders of Barry Gaelic of Hyannis, and Lawrence O'Toole of Dublin, to name a few.

Drama an alien reminiscence for Filipino Catholics around the area. But wait.

Amid the stream of images of Irish Catholicism are some very small—familiar like the hundreds of Pinoys residing near St. Patrick's in the Bayview Hunters area (Tenna).

Just after the main entrance is a towering image of the Black Nazarene, replete with a red, velvet robe and a huge cross. Not far from the high altar are images of Sto. Niño de Cebu and Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint.

So St. Patrick's is also considerably "Irish" church, after all. At least, not anymore.

Over the years, Filipino Catholics have gradually "Filipinized" the church, especially after the Irish brothers began leaving Santa for better living conditions outside the city. What has become of St. Patrick's since then is a church most frequented by Filipino believers.

It's even considered by some compatriots as the "Quiapo" church of the Bay Area.

Still the dominant culture

But, apparently not wanting to alienate the rest of St. Patrick's flock—Hispanics and newcomers, to name a few—Fr. Ed Daro, the pastor, is quick to clarify that the parish community "universal," a church for all.

"It's a church for every body," he says in an interview. "It just so happened that the dominant culture [among the parishioners] is Filipino."

Indeed, communal worship is never about "kanya-kanya" even if Catholics in most parishes in southern California have unadvisedly grouped themselves according to race. And much so in parish's dissimilar. St. Patrick's is seen by many as a "Filipino" church.

The perception is not without basis.

Of St. Patrick's around 300 registered parishioners, majority are Filipinos, according to Father Daro. His assistant, Fr. Noel Laput, says the number of churchgoers is actually more since many others "just yet to register."

In his mind, many of those Filipinos may have brought with them the mentality "back home" that they didn't have to sign up to belong to a particular parish, a common practice in the Catholic Church in the United States.

The sheer number of Filipino parishioners is overwhelming, especially during Sun Sundays of the month when a Mass is celebrated in Tagalog. They also come in full force on Tuesdays during St. Patrick's seven "Wednesday Recharge" and in other devotional popular among Filipinos.

Father Daro admits the church would have been a prime candidate for closure—like many US parishes in the '90s—if not for Filipino Catholics under its fold. In this respect, St. Patrick's owes much of its continuing existence to them.

"Just imagine if you remove the Filipino faces," he points out, "how many of the parishioners would be left?"

All-Pinoy household

In that remote possibility, the entire pastoral household would require nothing short of an overhaul. Besides Father Dave and Noel, who run the parish along with brother Fr. Charles Pedrosa, you'd have to find a replacement for Mimi Ruiz (organist), who handles Espanol.

Then there are Sister Lourdes Pilapil, who's in charge of religious education; Jun Abut, the janitor, and Elizabeth Legada, secretary and receptionist. Into the cook, 74-year-old Leona Stenberg, and janitor, Crispin Sedaris, are Filipinos. "Nanay" does the laundry and she's Filipino, too.

In all, there are around 300 Filipinos doing volunteer work for St. Patrick's in different capacities as lectors, commentators, altar servers, ministers, choir members, ushers—any work that keeps the parish going.

The so-called "Filipinization" of St. Patrick's is anything but a conscious, if not blatant, takeover. It's unlike the "Filipinization" of parishes in Spanish-era Philippines where many among the local clergy and their flock demanded wider participation in church affairs and bureaucracy.

From immigrant to immigrant

What happened in St. Patrick's instead was a natural turnover of parish management and continued devotion from one set of immigrants to another. Never was there any real discord between the Irish and Filipinos who both found spiritual refuge in the same church.

St. Patrick's was founded on June 9, 1851 by Fr. John Maginnis, himself a part of the huge population of Irish immigrants then settling in San Francisco's newly-formed diocese, according to its official, 66-page history book.

About a century later, in the 1930s, a new set of immigrants from Southeast Asia began flocking to the city. A decades-long setup among these Filipinos was Santa because of its proximity to job opportunities in San Francisco.

But this new group still struggling at racialness, the Irish-run church between the Third and Fourth Streets on Mission Street provided a welcome spiritual base. Some may seem friends with the Irish, especially Msgr. Clement McGinnis, the pastor for nearly 28 years.

"Very close to Filipinos," he encouraged representatives of Filipino piety as it's practiced in the Philippines. Father Daro says the Irish pastor welcomed popular Filipino devotions to the Sto. Niño, Sacred Heart, and Our Lady of Fatima.

Multicultural movements were just as accommodating, gladly obliging when Filipinos asked to bring icons of their faith to St. Patrick's. There was also an all-Filipino choir named "Pag-asa" (hope) were before St. Patrick's Filipino pastor, Msgr. Fred Shanga, took over.

"The Irish understood the spiritual needs of the Filipino people," Father Daro says.

How important is Irish to Filipinos in San Francisco?

Story of Mang Joe

Mang Joe, a church volunteer in his 50s, found life worth living again because of it. A "bum" for many years, he was no different from the number of greasy downtown lined up on Mission Street, who were oftentimes drunk and begging for skins.

Among his fellow parishioners, no one knows for sure how he ended up in the cold streets of San Francisco. He wasn't the type who volunteered his life story, it was his enemy, little is known about him, except that he's a war veteran-turned-engineer.

Mang Joe's endless wandering soon led him to the steps of St. Patrick's. Encouraged by the warm welcome of his compatriots, he found a home in the church and stayed.

Today he's still the silent type, but is quietly active in parish activities. He's foremost an altar server and parish handyman. One gets the idea only of his many pan. whenever he stops by—ngunit sandali ofrecibasin help.

"He feels for them because he used to be one of them," says Sister Lourdes.

Story of 'Tong'

Parth, too, huge Emelie "Tong" Sullivan, another church volunteer, going.

A medical technologist for 17 years at a government hospital in the Philippines, she went to San Francisco in 1993 upon the pending of her older sister, a certified nursing assistant there. Tong, a single-mother of a 17-year-old boy, was in a higher-paying job to prepare for her son's college education.

Her P6,000 (roughly $120) monthly salary back home and her meager earns as an everydispatch and real estate agent apparently weren't enough to support her child. So she tried her luck in the so-called land of opportunities first was the United States.

She hasn't been, since.

But all of these jobs eventually triggered a bitter internal struggle for self-respect for the former medical professional. She wanted to pursue a similar career in the US, but had to wait.

Prizes, in the American corporate ladder, her Philippine experience practically counts—zero-nothing. Employers demanded "local experience." In the meantime, she got married to a security agency supervisor.

In search of her profession

So she had to start from scratch. In her hunt for a real laboratory work, she landed jobs as a sandwich maker and convenience shop. She became a security guard, too.

Though early jobs offered "high" salary compared with Philippine standards back then, the professional in her was never appeased.

She was not alone in her sentiments. At the security agency where she worked, most of the employees were Filipinos. They were engineers, teachers, and accountants back home. One of them used to be a lieutenant colonel in the Philippine military.

"I had to swallow my pride," she recalls. "But all the while, I was focused on becoming a medical technologist here."

Until then, she discovered amusing in her spare life in San Francisco in the company of fellow parishioners. "I don't go to my self-centeredness of despair. I hold on to my faith and the Lord kept me going," she says.

At St. Patrick's, she joined the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Fatima groups, and later headed the team of volunteers. Today she's also part of the San Francisco Organizing Project, non-government advocacy group. She's the point person for St. Patrick's on issues regarding Filipino undocumentedness.

After 11 years

Sullivan's long wait for a career break came in 2002 when she was hired at the biomicrogyl laboratory of the prestigious University of California. There, she's basic, and soon passed the test for clinical laboratory scientists. After 11 years of patient waiting, she's now a full-fledged medical technologist here.

St. Patrick's was to Mang Joe and Sullivan what it has always been to hundreds of other parishioners: a refuge for the weary, a home for the immigrant soul. And thanks to the Irish, Filipino Catholics found their church, their place in San Francisco.

Editor's Note: This article is part of a series of Filipino migration stories the author is doing for the University of San Francisco's Center for the Pacific Rim under the Fulbright-Fellows Program for Young Professionals in the Media.

AN ALL-FILIPINO choir sings hymns to the Risen who gave His save life to save all men from sin.

THE BLACK NAZARENE, a life-sized, dark-colored, wooden sculpture of Jesus Christ carrying His cross, is regarded with as much reverence and respect in this San Francisco church as it is in St. John the Baptist Parish in Quiapo.

It is a church for everybody, but the Filipinos in San Francisco seem to have filipinized the church founded by an Irish priest in 1851, a living proof that Filipino Catholics are true believers wherever they are

Bush acknowledges weakness in US economy

NEW YORK — PRESIDENT George W. Bush preached optimism and Republican orthodoxy of minimalist government intervention on Friday as the best approach to increasingly troubled US economy.

The president chose the country's financial heart as the backdrop — and many of business as the audience — for his most high-profile attempt to date to calm nerves from Wall Street to Main Street.

The main message, aside from displaying confidence in the US economy's underpinnings and historical resilience, was to caution against overreaction by policymakers that could damage the economy's short- and long-term prospects, remarking he did about a half dozen times in 45 minutes of remarks.

"Our economy obviously is going through a rough time," Bush told a gathering of The Economic Club of New York. "The challenge is not to do anything foolish."

The Bush administration has been trying to find a balance between acknowledging lesser times and forecasting that better ones will come soon. White House officials predict that things will turn around by summer as the effects are realised from a series of aggressive interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve and an economic stimulus package that will send tax rebate checks to 130 million households starting in May.

But those actions face off against a series of blows; the dollar has dropped to new lows, while oil and gold are hitting new highs. The economy is now shedding jobs, rather than adding them. Retail sales have dropped.

Some economists believe the economy may already be in recession — a milestone that generally requires at least two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

At the root of the troubles is a two-year slump in the housing sector that has seen sales and prices plunge and created a severe credit squeeze that is rippling through the economy. In the race to skirt Bush's White House recession (but your economic worries have now replaced the Iraq war as the No. 1 concern of voters.

Presidents can do little to affect the economy's course. Perhaps the most effective tool of the Oval Office is the bully pulpit, from which presidents try to keep up people's spirits — and their wips to the mall.

In that midst, Bush emphasised that this is not the first time the economy has been rattled and that he remains confident it will ride out this period as others. He said low unemployment, strong productivity, high exports and a deficit small as a proportion of economic output are proof of the economy's fundamental strength.

"Every time, this economy has bounced back better and stronger than before," the president said.

Delivering this message before the economic chiefs corporate, wealthy largely homogenous membership of the executive-level Bush somewhat literally preaching to the choir: the 101-year-old group's new chair is Glen Hubbard, Bush's first head of the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

The president even began his remarks with a little joke about the state of the economy. "It seems like I showed up to an interesting moment," Bush said, drawing laughter from the group that included executives from troubled Bear Stearns Cos.

"In a free market, there's going to be good times and bad times, that's how markets work," Bush said. AP

IRANIANS GO TO POLLS
An Iranian woman casts her ballot at a polling station in Tehran on March 14. The elections are expected to register a conservative grip on parliament after a low-key campaign and the mass disqualification of reformist candidates by a hardline vetting body. AP

Senior al-Qaida suspect who helped Bin Laden elude US forces captured

WASHINGTON — A SUSPECTED high level al-Qaida member who helped Osama bin Laden elude US forces in Afghanistan has been captured and sent to the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Pentagon said on Friday.

The detainee, Muhammad Rahim, helped prepare the bin Laden escape and is a key contact for bin Laden in Afghanistan in 2001, and helped him escape during the US-led invasion that followed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, officials said.

He also tried to procure chemicals for a plot to attack US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan and to recruit people with access to US military facilities, Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman said.

"He is a close associate of Osama bin Laden and had close ties to al-Qaida organizations throughout the Middle East," Whitman said.

Rahim, an Afghan national, was detained in the summer of 2007, according to a statement CIA Director Michael Hayden gave to CIA employees. The CIA interviewed him into Defense Department custody earlier this week, according to Whitman.

Whitman would not say where or how Rahim was initially detained. He also would not say who captured him.

But Hayden said Rahim was transferred into US custody after his detention, which would mean the detainee was first held by non-US forces.

"Rahim was eventually moved into US custody and — given his past and the evolving threat he presented to American interests — placed in CIA interrogation program," Hayden said.

A senior counter-terrorism official would not describe the interrogation methods used on Rahim.

"I can't characterise the nature of his questioning (but) this detention was done in accord with US law," the official said.

Rahim served as a translator and courier for bin Laden, according to US officials.

Hayden said Rahim was proficient in several languages and familiar with the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that he had similar experience dating back to the 1980s — when US backed Islamic fighters drove Soviet forces out of Afghanistan.

"Rahim is a tough, seasoned jihadist," Hayden wrote.

According to the Pentagon, Rahim began working for al-Qaida in the mid-1990s, procuring supplies and later carrying messages among the group's leaders. He carried messages for bin Laden in early 2003, Whitman said.

Prior to 2002, he worked with Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, an al-Qaida commander now detained in Guantanamo. Whitman would not say whether information gathered from interrogations of al-Hadi led to Rahim's capture. Reuters

WorldBriefs

Russian agents foiled Putin assassination try

MOSCOW — Russia's secret service foiled an assassination attempt on President Vladimir Putin in Red Square on March 2, the day of the presidential election, the Tass Bee daily reported on Saturday. The newspaper did not cite any sources but gave a detailed account about the arrest of a Tajik national with a sniper rifle in an apartment near Red Square just hours before Putin was due to give a speech there. Contacted by AFP, the Federal Security Service (FSB) could not immediately comment on the report. Tass Bee, a popular daily, often prints exclusive reports on Russian politics citing unnamed officials. AFP

Heathrow opens multibillion-dollar terminal

LONDON — Jilted as a prime departure from gloomy authority, Rosalind Lalelli, bird lover and institutionalised dieter, smash-her-added fifth terminal at London's Heathrow airport was officially inaugurated on Friday, opening a multibillion-euro chapter in the battle between airlines and their customers. Said the airport's operator, promised spanking clock-to-and rapid passage through security controls, but late failure of the gleaming new steel-and-glass terminal seemed unchanged from its predecessors. With 111 retail outlets including Fortnum & Mason and Carrier, Terminal 5 will be an oasis in the sea of consumption as it plays to travel anxieties. Alone all, though, the operator is seeking to shed Heathrow's reputation as among the world's most congested and uncongenial airports. More than half a century after she opened the first permanent terminal at Heathrow in 1955, Queen Elizabeth II officially reopened the new building for really functional. AFP

The WORLD

Edna Lorraine B. Osorio

China to Tibet rioters: Surrender or else

BEIJING—CHINA SET A "SURRENDER DEADline," announced deaths and showed the first extensive television footage of rioting in Lhasa on Saturday, launching a crackdown after the worst unrest in Tibet for two decades.

The response came following world protests on Friday which flew in the face of official claims the region was tension from extreme as Beijing readies to hold the Olympic Games in August.

Xinhua news agency said 10 "innocent civilians" burnt to death in fires that accompanied bloodshed in the Tibetan capital on Friday, which also saw "hardcore criminals" deal fatal blows to "innocent people."

Xinhua, however, did not give the exact number of deaths.

The government offered rewards and promises for information.

For a source close to the self-proclaimed Tibetan government-in-exile suggested China's death toll of 10 was not the full story. He said at least five Tibetan protesters were shot dead by troops. Other groups supporting Tibetan independence have claimed many more may have died.

The Olympic torch arrives in Lhasa in a matter of weeks.

China has accused followers of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, of masterminding the unrest, which has angered its image of national harmony in the build-up to the Beijing Olympics and already sparked talk of a boycott.

"This was clearly planned by the Dalai clique to separate Tibet from the motherland," said the regional government centre, adding the claim that the burning of schools, hospitals, shops and houses was "premeditated."

Xinhua said its reporters in Lhasa on Friday saw many rioters "carrying backpacks filled with stones and bottles of inflammable liquids, some holding iron bars, wooden sticks and long knives."

Chinese and foreign residents of Beijing reported moves to secure certain sections had been blocked.

Tibetan wounds in the western mountain city attacked government offices, burnt vehicles and shops and threw stones at police on Friday in bloody confrontations that left many injured.

A Reuters picture showed a protester yelling after a Chinese national flag. Another depicted security personnel shielding themselves against rocks hurled by protesters. Television footage showed plumes of smoke rising over Lhasa and Nyalthang in Yunnan province, Tibet, said that Tibetan authorities had not fired any shots to quell the violence. Reuters

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Invt'l: Singh grabs lead; Woods 7 off
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Sunday SPORTS
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■ Rockets win 21st straight, tie Lakers atop Western /A25

We'll make war, vows Roach

By Ray Lustre

LAS VEGAS—THE FIRST TIME THEY MET, MANNY PACQUIAO put Juan Manuel Marquez on the defensive and nearly nailed him right in the first round.

Trainer Freddie Roach has instructed his fighter to aim to do this again in their rematch on Saturday, with slight variations, of course.

"We'll make it a war," said Roach after the weigh-in of Pacquiao-Marquez II on Friday. "We'll put pressure right from the opening bell."

MANNY Pacquiao (right) will push the fight to Juan Manuel Marquez right from the opening bell. EPA-EFE/FILE

Pacquiao intends to exploit his edge in speed and power by making Marquez, who boasted that he has cowered all boxers with legendary Mexican stature Ignacio "Nino" Espinoza, who has ruled as 10-world champion. (More Pacquiao stories on A1, A21)

Marquez said he will have an answer to whatever Pacquiao offers. But he will be able to adapt to Pacquiao's fighting style and find he is ready to go toe-to-toe with the 30-year-old Pacquiao.

Roach, a two-time trainer of the year awardee, scoffs at the claims saying that Pacquiao is in great shape and is ready for war.

"We'll take it to him," (Marquez)," said Roach, who believes that Pacquiao has grown stronger and better since the first Pacquiao-Marquez encounter held May 8, 2004.

Pacquiao, on the other hand, observed that Marquez was a little slower in his last two victories over Mexico nationals Rocky and Pesky Juarez, respectively.

"I hope he doesn't see," said Pacquiao, who's aiming to become the first Filipino and Asian three-time champion in three divisions. INFOG, A24

Pacquiao targets 144 pounds on fight night

By Ray Lustre

LAS VEGAS—MANNY PACQUIAO LIERRE himself to a sponge after Friday's weighin.

"Parang nag burn (I'm like a beast)," said Pacquiao, who checked in at 129 pounds for his rematch against Juan Manuel Marquez. "Mahilo konti, nahilo tuwalo (I ate tuk-kot, I built up fats)."

With signs of weak, spoonfuls of anyadora with eggs and slices of pears and watermelon, Pacquiao continued the process of bulking for way up to 143-144 pounds for his World Boxing Council super featherweight title bout against Juan Marquez Saturday.

About 30 minutes earlier, Pacquiao completed that process had chicken inasal, beef kebab, chicken adobo, beef boiled eggs and rice.

He also drank lemonade and took his daily requirement of four vitamins.

For the next hours leading to the bout at the Kodak Center of the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, all he'd need to do is rest, sleep with a little barbecuing in between.

Having cut down on his food intake only on Thursday, Pacquiao was jolly and sharp, a sharp contrast to his demeanor in his bout against Mexico Antonio Barrera last Octo-

INFOGRAPHICS A24

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Highlands ladies continue Fed League charge

Standings (as of March 14)
Group 1 (games: Played-Won-Lost-Drew-Points)
HIGHLANDS 6-6-0-0-12; STA. ELENA 5-5-1-0-10; KAMPIL 6-4-2-0-8; EDSA 6-3-3-0-6; MANDAUE 6-0-6-0-0

DAGAPAN HIGHLANDS SOLIDIFIED its bid for the first semifinals slot by storming back Sta. Elena in their return match in Group 1 while Valley forced Wash Wash into a draw in the other group as the Ladies Fed League eliminations entered its crucial stage in various centers recently.

Trixie Melang and Marijoe Bonnayo were the high low duet on the last hole to provide the clinching point for Tagaytay, which claimed its fourth straight victory after starting its campaign with a draw against the same Sta. Elena squad.

The inaugural champion in 2001 now have 10 points, four up on Sta. Elena.

This came after Shelly Sao-Sinahon composed the aggregate point with an A&T blowout and timely Bonnaddria Maria Ortana got half a point in the greensomes that more than made up for the loss of Rosay Jo Lee-Rosalie Davis in foursball.

Valley made things tighter in Group 2 by holding Wash Wash to a 2-2 draw.

Ding Liborio-Joanne Lee spearheaded Gaia Lopez-Wilma Medalla (Wash Wash) 4&3 (aggregate) secondhalf Wash Wash while Valley bonded back through Dina Flancia-Liz Mangubat-Cast. Jo Jaglo-lee and Belinda del Rosario-Sylvia Carpio in foursball.

Valley and Wash Wash remained tied at five points, a point ahead of Waterfalls Marcia Ortana got half a point in the greensomes that more than made up for the loss of Rosay Jo Lee-Rosalie Davis in foursball.

Standings for Riviera were Beverly Mendoza-Cora Fely in greensomes, Beth Abrahamson-Rosy Sto. in aggregate and Gina Lim-Ayumi Rose Guerrero in foursball.

Forest Hills kept its hopes alive by edging Manila Southwoods 2.5-1.5 in another Group 1 match.

Alice Grace Antonio-Irene Dy lost in greensomes, Christine Lorna-Joy Cabochan got a draw in high-low followed by wins by Vicky Orgeda-Cecille Tan in aggregate and Annie Qua-Irene Chan in foursball.

PSC lauds Honasan decision

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION yesterday lauded the decision of Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan to accept the chairmanship of the Senate committee on youth and sports.

Honasan, who used to co-chair the committee with Sen. Lito Lapid, is now the swallowed chair of the committee which dived by him the hand on the fate of Team Philippines participation in annual funding through the General Appropriations Act.

"This is a very good move because Honasan wants a few Honasans (he is our ally)," said PSC chair Ronie Hontiveros, whose friendship with the senator goes way back.

The Senate has for the last two years made budget cuts on the PSC, limiting it to just P55 million in 2006, on the heels of the country's overall championship in the Southeast Asian Games.

For the 2008, however, it raised the budget to P105 million through the GAA which will be spent for the PSC's operations including On upkeep of its facilities at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (Philsports and Ragain City training camp.

Top boxers pick Pacman

'Anything less than perfect won't do for Marquez'

By Ray Lustre

LAS VEGAS—A PERFECT FIGHT.

This is what Juan Manuel Marquez needs to defend Manny Pacquiao in their rematch for the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown on Saturday at the Venetian Center of the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino here.

Marquez would super bantamweight champion Daniel Ezequiel, though meeting for his conquistor, grudgingly admitted this to Mexico-based sportswriters Friday (See related stories on A8 , A23).

"He (Marquez) has to fight the perfect fight to beat Pacquiao," Zaragoza said in Spanish. "But a big shot by Pacquiao will change everything. He's no nonsense."

Zaragoza, however, gave Marquez a chance to win if the fight goes the full 12 rounds by outfighting his stripped-over technical skills.

Another Mexican, former world flyweight titlist Humberto Gonzalez Seth a different opinion. He sees the fight not hinting the distances with Marquez emerging as the victor.

"It's going to be knocked and it's going to be Marquez," said Gonzalez in Spanish.

Gonzalez, who fought against champion Hiroe Maeda said he's not picking any sides, his words gave him away.

"Pacquiao is very strong and he is ripped," said Maeda. "Juan Manuel Marquez is a General fighter but I give the edge to Pacquiao because of his strength."

Interestingly Pacquiao and Marquez share something in common going into fight night. Their younger brothers, Bobby Pacquiao and Rafael Marquez, chopped their last bouts.

Bobby was knocked out by unknown Abraham Galdon Antillon in two minutes and 49 seconds of the first round of their lightweight clash Friday at the Hard Rock Hotel.

Rafael, on the other hand, dropped his bid cop against fellow Mexican and super bantamweight rival Israel Vazquez via decision last month.

Marquez by KO? Don't bet on it

LAS VEGAS...FOR BETTORS, chances are almost all that Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez will knock out Filipino challenger Manny Pacquiao in the first round of their World Boxing Council Super featherweight title bout on Saturday.

As of Friday evening, a $100 bet on Marquez to win via first-round knockout would return a hefty $4,200.

A first round knockout by Pacquiao, on the other hand, would net just $2,800 for every $100 wager.

Harsh plays a part in the making of odds: Pacquiao doesn't Marquez three times in the opening round of their last meeting on May 8, 2004 that eventually ended in a draw.

Pacquiao is listed a heavy favorite for the rematch at -235 and Marquez is at +195. Simply put a $235 bet on Pacquiao would just net $100 while a $100 wager on Marquez would give $195.

Pacquiao's reputation as a power puncher is also evident with odds of him scoring a knockout listed at 77 percent.

Bettors think there will be a stoppage this time, with a $345 bet receiving just $100. Ray Lustre

MANNY Pacquiao is an overwhelming favorite on the betting tables.

We'll...

From page A23

more. 'Who does the fight will be boring.'

After making weight at 129 pounds Friday, Pacquiao said he intends to bulk up to 140-144 some fight time to exploit his natural weight advantage over Marquez, who customarily checked in at 126.

"I'll go all out for a win," said Pacquiao. "The knockout will be a bonus if it comes."

Meanwhile, for Diosdado Cubi, just making the weight is his 56th American Boxing Organization title bout against unbeaten Mexican Abner Mares on Saturday was a reward in itself.

Over six pounds above the 122-lb limit with barely four days to go before Friday's weigh-in, Cubi had to drastically cut his food and water intake.

The Cebu-Mexico encounter is on the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez rematch for the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown on Saturday.

Another Filipino, Michael Enrique, is also seeing action against Mexican Ricardo Cardoza in the featherweight class.

Meanwhile, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada called up the boxers and detailed he was here to watch the Pacquiao-Marquez bout.

Estrada said he is currently in Bohol, where he plans to spend the Holy Week.

Pacquiao...

From page A24

fast, when he was cranky and irritable due to starvation as he was 5.5 lb off the limit one week heading to the fight.

Pacquiao says Inhibited Perseverance Secretary Leo Almeda and former House Rep. Gen. Chavit Singson that they should take the emperor he's coming as they were good for the health of older men.

Then he saw the boxers hanging in the ring and wondered why WP Promotions was not among them.

Taking his time, Pacquiao finished his first meal of the day to about two hours before rounding and leading Team Pacquiao out of the fight venue and to his area in Mandalay Bay.

Pacquiao checked in at 129 pounds during the weigh-in which Marquez, who will try to defend his WBC super featherweight belt, doubted in at 126.

But Pacquiao has proven in the past that he can easily regain the weight he needs to meet the scales' limit.

In his third bout against Erik Morales, Pacquiao also checked in at 129, but was reportedly between 144 and 147 during fight night, giving him the advantage in bulk against the Mexican, whom he knocked out in three rounds.

SPORTSWATCH

Mighty Menthols start hot

DEFENDING CHAMPION MIGHTY MENTHOLS made their a mere warning to its rivals by winning their first two games in the MBT Division 2 Conference recently at the MTA in Mandaluyong City. The Mighty Menthols demolished Gilmi, 77-60, in the first game last week before clobbering Chartmax Richmond, 100, 78-64, on Monday, in leading filed. But Mighty Menthols things leaned on the hot shooting of Randy Dosa in the final half.

SHIP SUPPORT Rep. Prospero Pichay, president of BAR hands arm to MBT cohort Mike Fernandez as the sponsorship check in support of the women's league.

UGBA derby Mar. 25

A TOP PRIZE OF P1 MILLION (AT STAKE in the upcoming United Gamecock Basketers Association (UGBA) Open is sure to be the talked-for. 25 at the Araneta Coliseum. Entry fees, P18,000 per entrance fee is P5,000. Meanwhile, the deadline round of Heritage Cup 9 ballclug derby also are today at Araneta Coliseum on March 23. Interest than P1 million is guaranteed prize will be disputed for an entry fee of P11,000. For inquiries, call 0920-581-7832.

Young San Andres rides high anew

MULTI-TITLED ROGER KENNETH San Andres swept the Pro 125 races of the first Track National Motocross Series at the Fun Track Circuit in Tagaytay City.

The many-time Philippine Sportsmotion Association (PSA) member for motocross validated his claims as the country's best by crushing the field in the 3rd leg of the national series, also known as the 2nd Mayor Tenga Cup, where he scored a double-kill in the Pro 125.

San Andres defeated eventual second placer Arnie Sandig and 2nd runner-up Antonio Mercado in the first heat of the Pro 125, where he left his closest pursuer trailing by almost 200 meters behind.

It was practically the same script in the second heat as San Andres raced with the field of the series unchallenged by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (NOMSSA).

SAN ANDRES reaches the finish with flair.

It would have been a complete sweep, but a spill in the Pro Open after leading the field most of the way allowed his rivals to catch up.

Coaches head Filoil tourney

THREE PROMINENT BASKETBALL COACHES WILL serve as the commissioners of the 2nd Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup kicks off on April 13 at the arena in San Juan.

The commissioners—former national coaches Virgil Villaviencio, late Ed Rosario and Edmundo "Ber" Badolato—will oversee league rules and fund the tournament their years of respectability.

Villaviencio, who is the tournament's chief commissioner, said he feels honored that Del Rosario and Badolato agreed to accept their roles as deputy commissioners.

"They're not only my friends, but they have the experience and the reputation as former coaches in the other leagues. Besides, who would question coach's word and coach-Ian's credibility?" said Villaviencio, who coached the 1998 JCP Realtek team.

Del Rosario, who mentored the gold-winning RP team in the 2002 SEA Games and the 1989 and 1997 JCP Realtek teams, and Badolato, also a former national coach and multi-titled coach with the San Beda Red Cobs, both said they welcome the challenge of working with each other.

"The reason why we have to be on the playing arena every game because Virgil will be very busy because of his responsibility as Talk 'N Text (where he is a consultant and assistant team manager)," Del Rosario said.

Villaviencio added that to ensure fairness, coach Badolato will be on top of the situation on games not involving San Beda College, while Del Rosario, also a multi-titled coach of the University of the Visayas, will be tasked to supervise games not involving UST.

COMMISSIONERS NOW: (from left) Arie del Rosario, Virgil Villaviencio and Ric Badolato

The tournament opens with games pitting Ateneo and San Beda College in the opener set at 2 p.m., followed by the game between Jose Rizal University and De La Salle at 4 p.m., the final opening ceremony will precede the festivities at 1 p.m.

Palmer leads'l: Singh grabs lead; Woods 7 off

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—Fielder Vijay Singh showed no ill-effects from a recent stomach virus to fire a five-under-par 65 and take the lead in the Arnold Palmer Invitational second round on Friday.

The Fijian was nine under par overall, one shot ahead of Swede Carl Pettersson (66), Britain's Lee Westwood (68) and third on six under along with American Ben Duke and Jim Furyk at the Bay Hill Club.

World number one Tiger Woods was seven shots off the lead, tied for 20th place.

VIJAY Singh ...

Singh started on the back nine and birdied the 11th, 12th and 14th holes but the highlight was a chip-in from just off the green for an eagle three.

His performance was all the more remarkable given he nearly withdrew through food poisoning. Singh said he lost more than 6 kg due to sickness following the Johnnie Walker Classic in India earlier this month.

"I caught the flu and a stomach virus, together it was not very good," he told reporters.

"I thought I was going to pull out of this tournament but Friday I started having a few balls indoors in the shed."

Woods lamented a poor putting display but said he was still in contention for his fifth title at Bay Hill.

"I just need to play better and obviously make more putts than I have been. If I can do that, I'll get myself back in the tournament," he said.

"The hard part was every green is a slightly different speed."

Englishman Pettersson, who has won only once in the United States, the 1998 New Orleans Classic, was pleased with his round.

"Bay Hill is the ultimate exercise to never easy and I am not up pretty good for the weekend."

Overnight leader Fred Couples shot 73 to slip down to two-under.

Al Haney, who was level with Couples overnight on five-under, registered a level-par 79 while World number two Phil Mickelson recovered from an opening 72 to shoot a three-under 67.

Sweetman, Colin Montgomerie and England's Luke Donald were among those who missed the cut.

Ochoa trails by nine

In Hempstead, Mexico, Lorena Ochoa shot a 4-over 76—her highest score in nearly a year—in the Mastercard Classic, leaving the top-ranked Mexican one stroke ahead of fellow first-round leader Jill McGill on Friday.

Ochoa had six bogeys and two birdies on the hilly Bunker Hill Country Club course. Reuters, AP

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	PCT	GB
Miami	47	19	.712	—
Boston	44	21	.677	2½
Detroit	43	21	.672	3
Cleveland	42	23	.646	4½
New Jersey	38	26	.594	8
Washington	37	28	.569	9½
Orlando	36	28	.563	10
Philadelphia	33	31	.516	13
Toronto	31	33	.484	15
Atlanta	27	36	.429	18½
Chicago	26	38	.406	20
Indiana	25	39	.391	21
New York	23	41	.359	23
Milwaukee	21	43	.328	25
Charlotte	18	46	.281	28

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	PCT	GB
Dallas	47	18	.723	—
San Antonio	43	21	.672	3½
Phoenix	42	23	.646	5
Utah	41	24	.631	6
Denver	40	25	.615	7
Portland	39	25	.609	7½
Seattle	37	27	.578	9½
Minnesota	32	32	.500	14½
Pacific Division				
LA Lakers	43	20	.683	—
Phoenix	42	23	.646	2½
Golden State	40	24	.625	4
Sacramento	36	28	.563	8
LA Clippers	23	41	.359	21

x-Clinched Playoff Spot; y-Clinched Division; z-Clinched Best Record

Rockets win 21st straight, tie Lakers atop Western

HOUSTON—MUCH OF THE HOUSTON Rockets' remarkable roll has become stifled Yao Ming. Now their upcoming opponents might have to see what they can do without an injured star.

The Lakers could be missing Pau Gasol when they come to Houston on Sunday for a showdown with the Rockets, who extended their winning streak to 21 games—second-longest in NBA history—with an 89-80 victory over Charlotte on Friday.

The Rockets tied the Lakers for the best record in the Western Conference after Los Angeles lost, 108-98, to Utah. Orlando opened his left ankle in the first quarter and needed help getting to the locker room. He was on crutches after the game, saying he didn't want to put any weight on it in hopes of keeping the swelling down.

"It swelled up pretty good. We'll know more tomorrow," Gasol said. "We're going to make sure there's no damage to the ligaments, at least not too bad. I have confidence ... I seem to be back as soon as I can."

Bonzi Wells

Bonzi Wells finished with 20 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for the Rockets, who improved to 47-18 overall.

Yao Ming, who has been sidelined since Jan. 17 with a stress fracture in his left foot, is expected to miss the rest of the season.

Houston coach Jeff Van Gundy said Yao's absence has changed the Rockets' offense.

"It's not the same offense we had with Yao," Van Gundy said. "We're playing a lot more through Bonzi and Tracy [McGrady] and Rafer [Alston] and Juwan [Howard]. We're playing a lot more through those guys than we were with Yao."

Van Gundy said Yao's injury has also changed the Rockets' defense.

"We're doing a lot more switching and a lot more trapping," he said. "It was done for me to assist my wife's birthday."

The Celtics still clinched the Atlantic Division lead Friday when Toronto lost to Denver.

Pistons 86, Spurs 80

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Richard Hamilton scored 23 points and made an important late free-throw after hitting Detroit over undermanned San Antonio.

The Spurs were without Bruce Bowen (suspension) and Ime Udoka (right ankle).

Magic 102, Heat 94

In Miami, Orlando held off a surging Miami challenge to move closer to clinching an Eastern Conference playoff spot.

Jameer Nelson scored 21 points and Dwight Howard added 16 points and 16 rebounds for the Magic, who trailed by nine points late in the first half and never shook the hapless Heat, who lost for the 34th time in 37 games.

The Magic are now 9 1/2 games clear atop the Southeast Division.

Nuggets 127, Raptors 105

In Denver, the hosts blew out Toronto to win their fifth straight at home.

Allen Iverson scored 28 points despite a fractured finger and Carmelo Anthony added 22 for the Nuggets, who posted their season's highest point total of the season. Denver is 10-2 against the Eastern Conference at home this season.

Toronto has dropped three straight to start a five-game road trip and are fifth in the East's playoff standings.

Mavericks 116, Pacers 97

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 23 points, carrying Dallas past Indiana.

New back-up point guard Tyronn Lue had 13 points in 15 minutes for the Mavericks, who won their fourth straight, all at home and all against the weakest teams in the weaker Eastern Conference. The streak puts Dallas seventh in the Western Conference playoff race. AP

OTHER RESULTS: Nets 101, Bulls 98; Hawks 121, Clippers 92; Timberwolves 121, Supersonics 110.

HOUSTON'S Dikembe Mutombo defends as Charlotte's Emeka Okafor shoots. ...

RP booters' uniforms, equipment OK 'til 2010

THE PHILIPPINE FOOTBALL TEAM IS guaranteed to have decent uniforms and equipment for the next three years.

This came about after a sports apparel and equipment company impressed with the Philippine Football Federation's grassroots program, agreed to sponsor the men's and women's squads until 2010. Mizuno's P9-million deal also makes it a major partner in the PFF's projects.

The earliest beneficiary is the National women's team that will compete in the Women's Asian Cup second round from March 22 to 28 in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, site of the 2007 Southeast Asian Games.

Under the terms of the agreement, Mizuno Sportswares, exclusive local distributor of Mizuno sportswear and equipments, will provide the national squads all their sports requirements, including socks and uniforms for international tournaments, starting next year.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr., who witnessed the contract signing between PFF president Jose Mari Marcelo and Mizuno Sports president Lowell Gopez, lauded PFF's initiative in looking for sponsors.

"Self-sufficiency is something we always look for in our national sports associations," said Cojuangco.

Also in attendance during the contract signing were POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros, PFF general secretary Pablito Sumera, Jose Vito Restituto, PFF national teams committee chair and PFF technical director Juan Cutillas.

"On the PFF's behalf, I would like to thank Mizuno Sports and Mizuno for partnering with us," Martinez said. "This guarantees that our national teams will be well-equipped with quality and durable uniforms and equipments."

Drawn matches mark start of United Football

KAVA'S Sala Lacuna guards the ball against a Hotmale defender

TWO STANDOFFS MARRED THE start of the Punta United Football League which opened last Sunday in separate venues.

At the league's home field at the Newmark Club in Pamplanpar City, the British-dominated Newmark FC and Kaya FC battled to a 2-2 draw, with Kaya's Sudanese striker Ian El-Jaleh and Nomad's Shinichi Miyagawa accounting for crucial goals.

The match between Japan FC and Pampagi FC likewise ended in a 2-2 draw.

Over at the Ateneo High School football field, Superintendo FC dominated Union FC, 4-1 and Loyola FC clobbered Bonna Africa FC, 4-0.

The UFL will not meet until June 1 at the Newmark Club in Sherville, Pamplanpar City and the Ateneo High School football field.

Hamilton takes pole post

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—LEWIS HAmilton got an early psychological edge over Kimimi Raikkonen, winning pole position Saturday for the season-opening Australian Grand Prix while the world champion will start over the back of the grid.

Williams's Hamilton had the fastest times in the second and third runs of the three-phase qualifying session ahead of Sunday's race around the 5.303-kilometer (3.296-mile) Albert Park circuit, clocking 1:25.185 in the second phase and 1:26.714 in the third.

Raikkonen's session could hardly have started worse, relegated to 16th place on the grid in the race he won last season. His Ferrari teammate Felipe Massa was fastest in qualifying and will join Kwiatkowski on the second row of the grid.

HAMILTON and his Mclaren ...

AP

NESTEA BEACH VOLLEYBALL LUZON LEG VISITS CANTYE

The Nestea Beach Volleyball Luzon elimination will be held at the Island Cove resort on March 23-27. Photo shows (from left) Ina Lacorte of Island Cove, Nestea brand activation specialist Ajonat Dimacobing, Micky Reyes of Island Cove and Henda AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager Tina Samara during the launching of the event dubbed as the official beach volleyball event of the country.

Ekwe joins RP Harbour; Youth eyes Fil-Ams

By Jeannine W. Payo

BASKETBALL OFFICIALS APPROVED yesterday the inclusion of Nigerian Sam Ekwe in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association Seabed Champions Cup series as the Iloilo Philippine Youth Team cops several foreign players with Filipino roots in the United States.

Ekwe will suit up for Harbour Centre as an import when the four-time PBL champion represents the Philippines in the Seabea tournament in Jakarta from April 3 to 7.

"We really need him because we only have one legitimate center," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent after SEAB officials agreed to loan Iloilo's foreign student.

The Philippines will defend the Seabea title with national team members Jason Castro, Jeff Chan, Asinelbai Fernandez, Sheyet Austria, Al Vergara, Chad Alonzo, Helps and last conference's Finals Most Valuable Player JV Teng also bolstering the squad.

Ekwe, the 2000 NCAA MVP and Rookie of the Year, will join the team's practice starting tomorrow.

"With him around, we hope to keep our dominance in the tournament," said Harbour Centre owner Manny Romero.

The Iloilo Philippine Youth Team, meanwhile, will check out four Filipino-Americans during its two-week training in the United States.

"Hopefully three-fil-Ams will be able to impress us," said coach Franz Pumaren before the national team left for the 40-manner Import Basketball Camp in California last night.

The Iloilo RP Team will see action in the Jones Cup in Taipei slated in Kuala Lumpur in May and in the Asian Youth Championship in Tehran in September.

Tejada now all smiles

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

UNION CITY, California—The tall, basketball-crazy young man looked very fortuitous.

Supported by an orthopedic cane in each hand, he crossed the road to get to his new one-mile at the Junior League High School Gym.

As he approached and his features became clearer, I realized it was Eugene Tejada, the Pembroke super who was seriously injured in a game against Red Bull almost five years ago.

After two months in hospital, Eugene flew home in a wheel chair. Half of his body was paralyzed and his doctor's prognosis was not too optimistic.

He still uses the wheel chair when his legs get tired, but he should be getting rid of the canes in another six months," Eugene's dad Danny said.

Not only has Eugene's physical condition improved tremendously, so has his disposition. He is all smiles now, unlike the first weeks of his confinement at the Makati Medical Center.

* * *

At first the participants couldn't agree if the Legends should simply observe and remain the owner as Amy Go suggested, or if they should play the game seriously to win, as recommended by the Big J.

The core of 10 PBA players coming from Manila and various regions of the USA were divided into four teams for two games. They decided veterans would be fielded in the first and third quarters, the younger bunch in the second and fourth.

One team was headed by ex-Ginebra stars Alex Gonzalez, Rory Go, Bogs Adornado, Philip Cezar and Bernie Fabiosa, the other by ex-Tigers aspro Alan Ibe Sander, Francis Arnaiz, Abe King and Tim Cone with the Big J as coach.

* * *

Western PBA coach Pitoy Salazar, now based in Alaska, is proud of the two games here like a real pro. In addition to his full time job with Alaska Airlines, Pitoy said he was officiating on the side, at an average of three to four games every other day.

I told Pitoy the PBA might be looking for someone to replace Perry Martinez as the Basketball Hall of Fame inductee from Baguio city this month, following the controversial suspension of James Yap.

* * *

His job as caregiver may not be considered classy but many of his colleagues would be happy to trade places with Yves Pumaren. Yves' caregiver is the beautiful brunette owner of Kimberly Clark. Yves takes care of many other needs of the family and the old man.

The former Ism Miguel super took time out from his work to be with former teammates Hector Calma and Allen Caidic and other PBA friends. The new Yves Higuerala is certainly a far cry from the fun-loving one we used to know. Yves, who came to Union City with his wife and cute two-year old daughter, is the picture of a loving husband and doting father.

* * *

Like Yves, the real Ligaya Gingi's employer Steve and Benita Schwister, owners of Ohana Harbor Coffee, are very generous and supportive.

Benita Bear from Asuncion took her children to watch the Ohana Harbor team see the first game over Mantes Pembrook.

* * *

BOOKWISE: Ian Fournier based De Christian Brooks, publisher of the book "Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball," donated a hundred copies of the book to the PBA Legends Foundation Unit ... Sonny Cabrera is the only player whose name is being chanted by the crowd, especially when he's about to take a foul shot. Because he's the darling of the crowd, Sonny said thanks he should charge the organizers double the amount of what the others are getting.

Hot Pharex hangs Noosa

NOOSA'S John Wilson gets blocked by Pharex' Emmanuel Ortiz. [illegible]

Hapee arrests 2-game skid

SERIES TODAY (All at Metrocrest Coliseum)
3 p.m. — Hapee King vs Pizzaz
4 p.m. — Noosa Mexico Bichos

By Jeannine W. Payo

THE LEAGUE'S BIGGEST REVELATION continues to spring surprises.

Storming to unexpectedly hot start, Pharex launched a big run in the dying five minutes to turn back Noosa Shoes, 90-75, in the PBL Luzonian Annex Sports Cup yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

The scrappy Medics sealed their fifth victory in six outings by riding on a hot shooting performance from beyond the arc late in the game.

Francis Allen chilled 15 of his 17 points from three-point range, including a triple sandwiched by Emer Ortiz and Jeanne Raphael's own trips to sideline the Medics' 79-69 lead with 2:40 to go in the contest.

"It was a struggle from the first to the third quarter; at least we stuck together," said Pharex coach Carlo Tan.

But more than their shooting skills, Tan noted that it was a very defensive game that made the Medics look far from the team that debuted with only two wins last conference.

"We're more of a defensive team," he stated. "Even if our team in the 90s, it hit our points came from our defense," he added, in reference to game the Medics, who earned just half a game behind the unbeaten Hapee Cream.

In the second game, Hapee Youth guards scrambled for late-game dish, but still struggled to forge a 70-68 triumph over San Mig Coffee.

Hard Antilla and Gabe Norwood took care of things in the end game after the Complete Protection blew a 20-point advantage, 27-7, in the first half.

The Complete Protection moved up to third place with Burger King at 4-2, yet coach Louie Alas expressed disappointment with his squad.

"We were very inconsistent in our defense; we also have many unforced errors," said coach Louie Alas. "I'm still trying to figure out if the team lacks energy or if they don't have the defensive skills I'm planning for them."

Antilla supported with 15 points, while Norwood delivered another stellar game of 13 markers, seven rebounds, six assists and four steals.

Pharex looked poised to pull away in the third period with Ortiz and Allen orchestrating a 15-4 surge that turned a 41-37 deficit to a 60-51 advantage.

But Noo Aussie, who finished with a game-high 23 markers, fired 12 straight points for the Shoe Store to close the contest at 63 early in the fourth quarter.

Final Score

PHAREX (90) — CHALUS, Allen 17, ORTIZ 15, Garcia 9, Villamin 7, Talandgan 2, Cruz 0, Raphael, De Guzman 4, Medina 4, Ignacio

NOOSA (79) — Jose 17, Ibe, Pada 12, Bolick 11, Gerlan 7, Santos 6, Sangalang 6, Pineda 5, Jimenez 4, Cabral 2, Mangahas, Cortes, Sangalang, Ong 0

Quarters: 12-14, 27-28, 52-42, 90-75

Second Game

HAPEE (70) — Antilla 15, Arellano 12, Norwood 12, Ochoa 6, Laguerta 5, Dimaculangan 5, Bautista 4, Tan 2, Pena 0, Gumaru, Cuyapen 0

SAN MIG COFFEE (68) — Custodio 14, Alolino 13, Gaba 11, Salenga 8, Jamero 7, Barroquillo 6, Sabang 5, Arao 4, Gabisa 1, Mahipo 0, Lucenario

Quarters: 19-15, 29-32, 52-50, 70-68

EJ's Magic eyes 3rd major victory

STABLE WINNING GALLOPER EJS Magic takes on the challenge of the veterans as he heads six other Class A Division 1 campaigners in the Philracom Appaasmatine El Rodeo today at the Metro Area Park.

Fresh off back-to-back group victories, the four-footed thoroughbred will try once again to extend his range over 1,800 meters in hopes of winning his third major event.

Campaigning under the banner of owner Evangeline Jose and trainer Eduardo "Eddie" Jose, the proven charger by Jeff Fowler (USA) out of Her Signature will be skippered by regular rider Dominic Barbon Jr. and carries top weight of 56 kg.

Expected to provide a good challenge a former champion sprinter finishing longitudinal, the celebrated daughter of champion sire Hector LALIG out of Roses Affirmed (USA). At the ridden by 2003 19th Jockey of the Year Pat Dilema.

The 4-year old now more from the racing stable of Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos and trained by champion trainer Ruben Tupas is coming off a dreadster victory in very victory against group competitors on his most recent start.

Similarly of Silvers makes his comeback while Triple Crown hopeful Anonymous, the youngest in the field at 3 years old, will try to gain valuable experience against the veterans.

Top athletes hold clinics this summer

SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP ATHLETES in taekwondo, badminton and swimming will share their knowledge and skills as Olympians Sports conducts summer clinics starting next week.

Taekwondo jin Yohombo Go, who will compete in his second Olympics in this year's Beijing Games, Olympian Flores, the country's No. 1 badminton player, and Jake Yenzon, a four-time member of the national water polo team, head the summer clinic instructors.

"It's going to be fun and exciting for all participants because they won't just see their sports heroes but they will have a chance to get the best lessons," Evangelista said.

The summer classes are in conjunction with Sweaters Sports Hills and backed by Accel and swimwear by Blast & Sons.

Badminton, swimming and basketball will open on Mar. 24 at includes and in other venues.

On Mar. 25, swimming classes will start at Sweaters, while basketball is set on Apr. 1 with former PBL player JV Ingful as instructor at the Holy Child Catholic School in Tondo. On Apr. 8, taekwondo classes start at Sweaters.

Clinic fees are: P1,000 in swimming; P1,500 in badminton, P5,000 in taekwondo and P1,500 in basketball. For details contact 254-7228 (look for Kathy).

GOLF AWARDEES. Iloilo Country Club team officials, standing, (from left, standing) emerged as overall champion of the Sinsera Corp. Golf Club tournament held in various courses all over the country. Sam Mirasol (Solaire) and second overall while Sinsera chair Bob Deampo took third place. Ray Yang served as tournament director.

Benito stuns Shell ROK field, rules kickoff leg

KGR TUNER RACING'S JERRY BENITO pulled off a stunning victory in the ROK Junior Expert class recently in the kickoff of the 2003 Shell Helix Super Karting Series at the Carmona Circuit (Philippines).

The 12-year-old Benito took the lead in the first lap, but lost it to defending champion Jori Benitez and Vi Stubs of Jet Racing in the early laps of the Final Heat.

A few laps later, Benito overtook Benitez and set his eyes on Stubs. A crucial and timely maneuver at the final turn with five laps to go finally installed him on top.

Afterwards, Benito slowly but surely increased his lead over Stubs to preserve the big win.

Piloting the Intrax Ignition of 44.257 seconds, he wrapped up the 20-lap race in 14 minutes and 8.382 seconds, just 0.658 seconds ahead of Stubs.

"It was a tough race and I really had to concentrate to never the lead," said Benito after the race. "With the victory for sure I will be the main target to be beat race in Batangas."

Joey Orchina, last year's Mini-ROK champion, made it a double celebration for KGR Tuners Racing when he ruled the ROK Junior Master class ahead of Benitez.

The 12-year-old Dalisay Mercier put up a good fight as he fanned himself finishing Buenagsin of Jet Racing after the rolling start.

KGR Tuners Racing Mercier bagged runner-up finishes behind Mr. Mendoza who wound up second in the Formula SL Novice division, Julia Tarallia (Formula 125 Senior Open) and Alex Medrano and Hazel Estevanez in the Ladies' Silver class.

BENITO starts out his pursuers while negotiating a turn.

'TAKE THIS, DO THAT'

What people want Manny to endorse

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

BOXING SENSATION MANNY PACQUIAO USUALLY punches his way into the attention of the whole world—including institutions on the lookout for the perfect product endorser. As the sport's top popularity scorer, he has his product endorsement deals multiplied.

The General Santos native has been called by many names. From 'Ang Pambansang Kamao' (The National Fist) to the "world's best fighter."

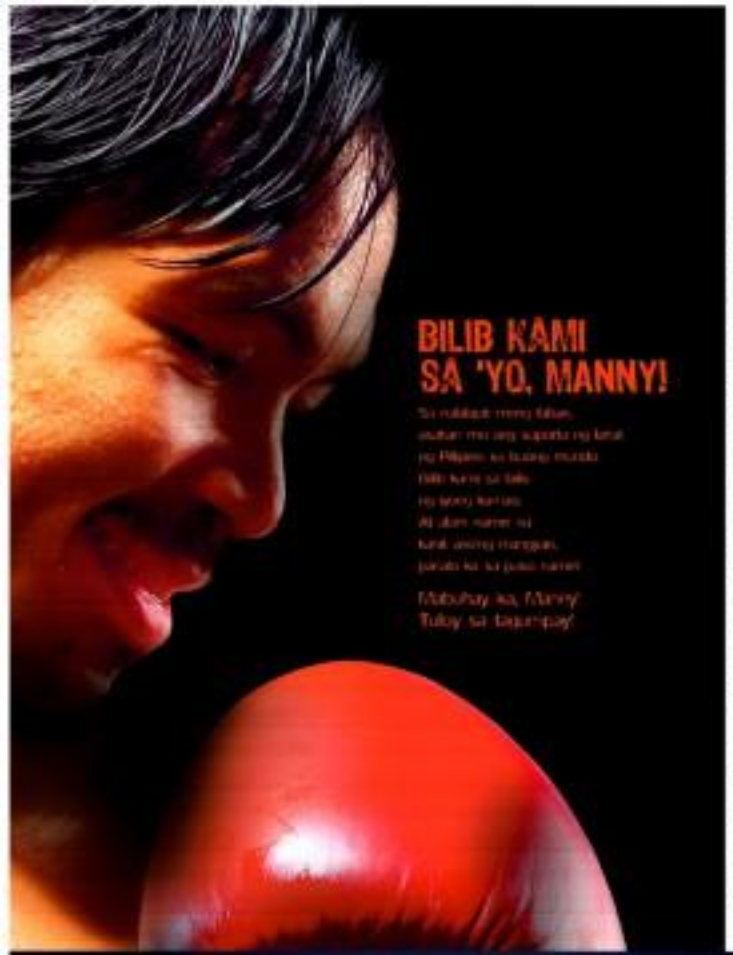
But after relentlessly landing one product advertisement after another...one unlike his speedy and unforgiving, one two punches in the boxing arena—a seemingly more appropriate tag as "endorsement king" is unanimous.

Through the years, Manny has bombarded the public with television, radio, and newspaper advertising campaigns for a beer, pain reliever, fast-food chain, and even a sing-along microphone, among others.

A mini poll, which included students and call center

MANNY KB

PACKED AND LOADED: WBC Super Featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico and Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines pose during their official weigh-in at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada March 14. Marquez will defend his title against Pacquiao at the Corner today.



PACMAN
HANDA NA!

Sapat na ang training. Sapat na rin ang sparring. Tapos na ang paghihintay. Dumating na ang araw ng pagbabalik.

Ngayong gabi sa Mandalay Bay Hotel & Casino sa Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, papasok na uli sa loob ng boxing ring si Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao, ang kasalukuyang "People's Champion" Sa pangatlong pagkakataon, makakaharap niya si Juan Manuel Marquez ng Mexico. Pareho ang malaki ang dugo. At pareho may gustong patunayan pagkatapos ng kanilang kontrobersyal na laban noong 2004 na nagtapos sa isang draw.

Dooe sarasabing unanimous decision, pinalumbo ni Pacquiao si Marquez ng tatlong beses sa loob lang ng first round. Agunit inasahan ni Marquez ang galaw ala guhit ni Pacquiao at nakapalan ito hanggang sa huling pagtunog ng salt.

Buong pamimeras ng kamao ni Pacquiao – pati na rin ng lahat ng Pilipino sa buong mundo – na-inalala mula kay Pacman ang tagumtay na kinapat-dapat na kabigo sa kanya. Apat na taon na ang lumipas. Pagkatapos na ni Manny upang maparamayan sa buong mundo kung sino talaga ang dapat nanalo sa kontrobersyal dikesi ni Marquez.

At muta raam, pinakita ni Manny ang unti-unti niyang pagkamore sa pag-boxing. Na-demoyo na niya ang kanyang right hook. At base sa pinakita niyang pag-dominate kay Miguel Antonio Barrera sa kanilang huling laban, mas matatrong boxer na si Manny ngayon.

Pero ang pinakamatinding bagay si Manny sa loob ng boxing ring ay ang laki ng kanyang pagsusikap. At kapag tandi mag-tagal si Juan Manuel Marquez, bawa tandi na siya makatatanggol pa kapag tinamaan siya ng kanilang kotse ni Pacman.

Bilis ng suntok... lakas ng katawan at ang pinalangin at suporta ng sambayanang Pilipino. Kumpleto na ang paghahanda. Tuloy na sa tagumpay!

PRESENTED BY:
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THE KID GLOVES ARE OFF Manny bares on the scale during an official weigh-in at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada March 14. Manny and WBC Super Featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico settle the score today

What people want Manny . . .

By Jess Diaz
Inquirer

opinion, asked what product or company they would avoid. Pacquiao is violence and why.

Several said the boxing icon better stick to endorsing sports-related goods, while others prefer not to see him endorse anything at all. Below are some of their answers:

• "I would like Manny to endorse a sports training center like the Aquino academy in Cavite. This would be a great opportunity for him to develop more talents not just in boxing but other sports as well." - Rommel Reyes, 22, culinary student

• "There was a rumor I heard about Pacquiao endorsing Nike with the likes of Tiger Woods and Lebron James. I hope that pushes through because he should endorse brand names that are equally popular." - Leonora Heredia, 23, call center agent

• "Honestly, I don't want to see him in any commercial anymore. But if I were him, I would definitely not want to endorse a vinegar or ice cream company to simply shower and up. I would rather be seen with promoting gloves, vitamins, supplements, energy drinks, and sportswear." - Hermione Hollo, 18, development communication student

• "Maybe the Department of Education can utilize Manny's popularity to uplift the country's literacy rate by encouraging more children to go to school and read more. He could also become a spokesperson for the government's poverty alleviation programs." - Tyronne A. Regodo, 27, online English instructor

• "I would want Manny to endorse the book titled 'Your best life now!' by Joel Osteen. I believe he could become a great source of inspiration to many Filipinos and help us understand what living life to the fullest is all about." - Ferdinand Domingo, 26, technical support

• "Manny would be good as Gatorade endorser. He would be more effective in campaigning for goods or values that are sports-related because he had built a reputation for himself as a sports legend." - Lyndon Castroverde, 24, team leader

Whatever product, service, or institution Manny chooses to endorse, it would definitely involve multimillion peso deals. But who's counting? With the champ's charisma and selling power, the products he's endorsing are sure-toppling their plates off on the way to the bank.

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Sunday BIZ

MICHAEL del Rosario (back row, left) and brother Rodolfo "Junior" (back row, third from left) have been tracing tourists to their father and grandfather's sanitapan dating back to 1946.

Reunion reconstructs history of Baguio businesses

WW II destroyed most ventures when Japan invaded and set up its headquarters in the summer capital

Text and photos by Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—ONE OF THE summer capital's largest Chinese-Filipino families has reunited all its former employees from 1940 to 1980, helping to reconstruct the story of how Baguio's business industry was born.

Descendants of the late Leong Kwen Ling began organizing these homecomings in 2005, to give homage to Cantillero workers who toiled to build a working Baguio economy.

Michael del Rosario, Leong's grandson, said without these workers, his grandparents would not have built the old Mountain Supply Store that catered to the booming mining industry of the early 20th century or the Leong's Bakery of the 1940s, named after her kid here.

The bakery operated with no more than 10 workers at a time.

Del Rosario now operates the city franchise of the American fast food chain McDonald's, and Hotel Genio in downtown Baguio. He also helps run the family's frozen-food supermarket.

Most of a hundred employees attended the Feb. 26 reunion, swaying with them rich stories about old Baguio.

Common to these stories was the fact that they all managed to finish school using wages they earned from baking bread for "Tommy's," says Ito Mendoza, a former mayor of Kabayan town in Benguet. "To them, school was P5 a unit," he says.

"Baguio was still empty back in the early 1950s," Mendoza says. "Science Road was the only paved street; that did not change. Session's was the biggest store then."

A retired teacher, one of the family's former grocery clerks, says people walked for miles to buy loaves of "Tommy's" bread.

"I used to work for the family. But even when I left to finish at the teachers' college, I patronized the bakery. I walked for a day carrying three loaves back to my town so I could for a dying aunt taste the bread," she says.

She says many employees had to hike to the city from neighboring Benguet towns to work for Leong.

According to a Brookline fact sheet, Leong was a "pioneer" businessman in 1909 when the American colonial government first opened the doors to what was then a Baguio "wilderness." The city was chartered in 1909.

"The 1908 Commission Report stated that at the time in Baguio, there was one hardware store and a few shops operated by the Chinese and the 'natives,'" economic-travel University of the Philippines professor Bienvenido Tapang Jr. in an article on "The Bailey Castle Enterprise in Benguet."

Tapang's study dissected how the Baguio commercial economy was disrupted by the American colonial government and by 20th century "American lifestyle."

He noted that "American policy was directed toward creating a viable mining industry and developing a Western hill station (that became Baguio)."

To this end, the colonial government sold Baguio to investors to develop it as the city's cornerstone, and shaped mining policies to enable American prospectors to take over mines set up by Europeans during the Spanish colonization, Tapang wrote.

Leong was among many Chinese-Filipinos who were drawn to the mining

TEARY and old neighbors at the reunion

'Ukay' fashion goes e-Bay

Text and photos by Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—"Where in this country can you sell a whole wardrobe reconstituted from ukay-ukay (secondhand bargain clothes) fabrics for under $400 (P16,000)?"

Check out the online trading over at eBay. For the last six years, a stylist from fashion town in Bangkok has used the Internet to market Baguio's sea-deprived wagwag (a local term for ukay-ukay) and the Benguet weaving fabrics popularized in the 1970s and 1980s by businesswoman Narda Cayabyab.

Hilton Beany, 36, says women and gays men from the United States have found a niche for the Baguio-bred fashion, and have tried to outbid one another for such simple things as blouses put together from discarded human fabrics and lined with woven dust.

Beany grew up in a town that has yet to find its identity. Fashion is only an hour's drive from the summer capital, but unlike other Baguio neighbors like the vegetable-trading town of La Trinidad or the mining town of Itogon, the community's primary trade is humans.

"I am a businessman. I know what sells," Beany says. His social-work sensitivity to what drives him to eBay.

He says the fashion industry that tried to grow in Baguio had been seemingly.

There are no indigenous resources for fabrics, and there are few markets willing to experiment with local designs, he says.

Fashion designers could only put together P3,000 gowns using imported materials. Today, even the dressmaker has to retool her business because of the wagwag. People can buy much more wagwag for P3,000 than purchasing a gown, he says.

Beany tried to build a fashion line in Canada in 2000 but found that business environment there was much colder.

It was a Canadian-based cousin who suggested selling his designs online because of the stumbling responses to the sale of used celebrity garments there, he says.

His cousin set up a small firm called Modesta Styles to house his products.

The very first product out of the Modesta line re-dyed internet fans the arm sewn a pair of jeans, which Beany stitched together using faded woven materials.

He spent about P75 on the product, but it was sold when bids reached $150.

Many of the garments today have been manufactured in Baguio when Beany returned to the country in 2007, and are sent by parcel mail to the winning bidder in the US.

"It's the American guy now who loved the designs. The indigenous materials gave the clothes (the kind of) exotic (oh-mystic) ethnic they loved. I once sold an ordinary t-shirt packed with hemp (denying stand) and then I had to explain that it was an ordinary fabric from the Philippines. It was quickly snapped up," he says.

I realize that my clothes are selling well because they are one-of-a-kind and they are unusual for the Americans, so I don't really produce that many (I can put together) maybe three kinds of clothes a month and I can be comfortable with the profits," he says.

Online anonymity also protects him from top companies that may complain about the use of their fabrics.

"In the Philippines, many designers already brand a use for wagwag. They (stitch together) things from different brands and produce something new and original. I don't know what the copyright laws there would say about what we do, but eBay sells mostly products that are by-bitch also of many products," Beany says.

Like many overseas Filipino workers, the recent decline in the American dollar's market value has affected his trade.

Lately, I have increased the price so I can compensate for the exchange rate. I only get a third of the profits anyway, eBay and my cousin take a share from the auctions," he says.

eBAY businessman Hilton Beany

BIZDEV Armed to the hereteeth as will his designs which have drawn him quite a profit.

THE EXCAVATED areas can be turned into artificial ponds that should be lined with polyethylene liners or hardened clay.

Water management program ensures farmers irrigation during dry season

"The idea is to water your crop just enough to survive the dry months," says Lumagbas.

MERCADO IS ACTIVELY PROmoting the building of water impounding areas to combat the dry season in farms with an irrigation system.

Joel Lumagbas, head of Pamalakaya Philippines Inc.'s Agricultural Services, reveals that his team at the Nueva Ecija Experiment and Development Farm is educating farmers in the building of artificial ponds in low-lying areas of farm lots where rainwater naturally collects.

"It's cheap, easy to build, and better than doing nothing," he says.

Water management is one of the major problems faced by farmers in areas nearby hit by dry weather conditions. In Mindanao, for example, the dry season starts as early as January and lasts until May. Luzon's dry season, meanwhile, starts as early as December.

How it's done

Lumagbas says the excavated areas to be turned into artificial ponds should be lined with polyethylene liners or hardened clay, whichever is more available, from the harvest up to rare meters past the lip. This helps prevent water from seeping into the water collection.

Polyethylene liners, the same materials used to plastic mulches, are the cheapest and sturdier choice. They are readily available in roll sheets in agriculture supply stores across the country," he adds.

Surviving the dry months

The pond can start from as small as 5 by 12 meters at one meter deep per one hectare of farm land size. Lumagbas says it takes at least 60 cubic meters of water per hectare of coffee to partially irrigate a hectare of crop.

"The idea is to water your crop just enough to survive the dry months," says Lumagbas.

He adds that they usually advise farmers to ask their local government units to provide bulldozers if there's a need for bigger projects.

"Otherwise, it's good old bayanihan labor," Lumagbas says.

As a bonus, Lumagbas says farmers can choose to raise tilapia or catfish as fresh water eels in the pond for additional income.

Established in 1984, NEDF in Tagaytay, Outside Old Manila, serves as the hub of Pamalakaya's agriculture research and training activities.

Through its expert agronomists, the NEDF continually conducts trials and experiments on diseases and develops farmer techniques of growing coffee.

Guided by the results of its research studies, the NEDF develops and propagates Batangas coffee materials such as coffee seeds, seedling cuttings, and ready-to-plant seedlings. These are all made available to interested farmers at a cost.

Malaysian brand to cash in on Pinoy's coffee craze

FILIPINOS LOVE A GOOD cup of coffee, evidence in the numerous cafés that sprouted in every nook and cranny of the metropolis and key cities across the country. For them, sipping a Batanes coffee brand is a unique beverage experience, as if sipping their Uncle Sam Daddy cross of ages.

Coffee-loving Pinoys will soon discover that enjoying a satisfying cup of gourmet coffee need not be pricey with the recent launch in the Philippines market of the popular Malaysian 3-in-1 brand Old Town White Coffee.

According to Annabelle Chua, exclusive distributor of the coffee, the new brand is expected to make the Pinoy's love-bound crazy.

She said her husband Peter came across the brand a few years back when they went to a getaway in Hong Kong, sampled it and were captivated by its gourmet and bold taste they have not experienced in any other coffee before. They brought cartons of coffee to Manila, thus starting a love affair with the brand.

When they went to Malaysia years later to search an opportunity arose, they sought out the manufacturer to forge a distributorship contract.

"Old Town has a unique taste which the Pinoys' adventurous and discerning taste buds will surely enjoy because of the special blend of arabica, robusta and liberica coffee beans, which are roasted and roasted in perfection," enthuses Chua.

It is available in 3-in-1 coffee sachet boxes in SM Hypermarkets, SM Super Value stores, Robinson's Supermarkets, The Landmark Makati and Unimart, and Shoppers Inc. outlets.

"For just about the price of a 11-ounce milktea bottle, you can enjoy an instant blend of gourmet coffee in the comfort of your home," adds Chua who also owns the Beijing Tong Ren Tang traditional Chinese pharmacy in Divisoria, Manila.

The coffee lines started the unique "white coffee" blend in 1958 in the Malaysian town of Ipoh when the owner put up a "kopi tiam" or coffee shop. It is produced by roasting the beans with just 10 percent and roasted to a lighter degree, resulting in a lighter blend.

To meet increasing demands, the coffee company came up with pre-packed instant coffee and freeze-dried coffee so make them available anytime, anywhere.

To give its customers more choices, it introduced new variants—the classic, mild, hazelnut, Boston, the "white" or milk tea and its newest product, the beaded-ice sugar cane Durian.

For coffee lovers who favor a stronger darker palette, the Tian Tong series is the authentic brew. Packed in handy filter bags, it is easy to serve up a strong cup of coffee to wake the senses up.

Old Town is also certified "halal" or fit for consumption by Muslims because it has passed rigid health standards.

Based on a recent AC Nielsen market research, the brand in Malaysia's leading white coffee purchase and the fourth biggest in the coffee industry. It is currently exporting to Hong Kong, China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Italy.

Back home, it has more than 60 cafés in key areas across the country and targets at opening three new outlets monthly. It recently opened its first overseas café in Singapore and will be pushing up two outlets in Hong Kong by middle of this year.

All told, every cup of Old Town is indeed a hot beverage with a bold native and a dash of Malaysian coffee heritage.

Reunion reconstructs history of Baguio businesses

From page B1

buses, and was employed as a carpenter by the Benguet Consolidated Mining Co.

"It was in the mines that he discovered his branch for business. He opened a small store in order to fix co-employees," the Bautistas last chest says.

Like in stories about resorters Wild Idea Inquirer, Lacap's shop was robbed and his employees murdered. But it compelled him to build instead a grocery and bazaar from where the local economy picked up steam.

His fortune grew, allowing him to develop a virtual monopoly of hardware and food items that branched out to the mines of Itogon.

Tuping's study listed Mountain Supply store among the first establishments that boomed here, alongside the Japanese Bazaar (operated by the ancestor of the Cariño family, the city's prominent Bukidnon), the Mountain Studio and Filmtan (which still operates today), and the First City Beauty Parlor (now gone).

Herbert Whitcomb, who was appointed Baguio-Benguet governor, was credited for opening the Baguio Commercial Store, described as "the first of its kind" in the city.

World War II destroyed most of these businesses when Japan invaded the Philippines and set up its headquarters in the summer capital.

The Del Rosario clan was forced to hide in Kapangan, recounting the family's ties to Rodel and Kimbowsky residents.

"Tuping" took over after World War II to rebuild the family business, and some of its oldest employees at the homecoming realized that many of them originated from Kapangan.

Del Rosario and his older brother, Rodolfo Jr., grew up working side by side with many of those employees.

Gian Sia, one of the family's oldest haircut who showed up at the homecoming in a wheelchair, was one of those who virtually raised "Sonny" Leung's children.

Sia, who worked for the Leungs from 1958 to 1995, had lost a leg in a diseases. During the reunion, he appeared pensive but he brightened up when even the Del Rosario brothers acknowledged him.

It was Silvestre the former mayor, who took most of the brothers' siblings during the reunion. "I remember him when I was growing up. He used to stay inside the bakery's counter room, teaching things in English. He was locked in there practicing English," Del Rosario says.

Initiative

IT'S CLICHÉ TO SAY that every journey begins with a single step, yet it's true. Leaders don't wait for everything to be perfect before they move forward. They don't wait for all the problems or obstacles to disappear. They step forward despite their uncertainties. Leaders take initiative.

Leaders know the secret of momentum: once you take the first step and start moving forward, everything becomes clearer and easier. If momentum gets strong enough, problems begin to take care of themselves and new opportunities arise. But the benefits of momentum are only come into play once you've taken initiative.

As leaders, why are we sometimes timid or tentative when we should be taking action? In my experience and observation, there are six root causes of our procrastination.

Sources of procrastination:

1. We hesitate to do chores we don't enjoy.

For me, yard work has always been draining. I don't find pleasure in it, and there's a million other things I'd rather spend my time doing. When I was first married, I would procrastinate on mowing our lawn until it grew into a small jungle. I knew mowing would make my home look nice and would please my wife, but I shirked giving it my time and attention.

2. We hesitate to do activities we aren't good at doing.

I enjoy the arts, and I am fascinated by highly creative persons. However, I'm not particularly gifted in painting, drawing, or designing. That's why I avoid decorating. I enjoy a finely manicured Christmas tree, or an exquisitely decorated room, but I simply have no talent at making things look good. As a result, I will put off decorating as long as possible.

3. We hesitate to do what isn't on our agendas.

Human nature tends to be set in its ways. When changing circumstances make our plans obsolete, we resist making adjustments. We stubbornly hold to our old course of action and avoid altering our behavior.

4. We hesitate in active situations that are likely to be messy.

A prime example is confrontations. It's difficult to tell someone what they don't want to hear and probably won't respond well to being told. Dreading the possible outcomes, we dawdle and delay rather than initiating confrontations.

5. We hesitate to tackle a task that is high energy and low return.

As leaders, we are hard wired into getting the most bang for our buck. The same holds true with our time. We want to invest it profitably. As such, I have always been hesitant to put energy into relationships with high maintenance donors or members who aren't substantial contributors to the organization.

6. We hesitate to stop tasks (things we don't understand).

I have the saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." My generation has had to come to grips with fast-moving technologies, and it hasn't been easy. I don't understand many features of GPS systems, iPods, or PDAs, and, as a result, I procrastinate adopting them into my life...even though I know they could be helpful to me.

Vision and values: Antidotes to procrastination

Author John Bevere says, "Most people don't lead their lives, they accept their lives. Leaders are the exception. In their mind's eye, they have a vision of exactly where they want to go. By keeping that vision in the forefront of their minds, leaders develop promise, motivate hosts, and, acquire a sense of urgency. The vision continuously drives the busy behind everything a leader does.

Leaders with a vision are active rather than passive. Whereas most people follow the path of least resistance, visionary leaders refuse to settle for what's comfortable or easy. They shape their world rather than fitting into it.

John C. Maxwell

In addition to following a vision, leaders wholeheartedly embrace their God-ordained core values. Leaders are attracted to what they feel is important in life, and they align their activities to reflect those beliefs. Values dictate what they will do, what they will avoid, and where they will invest their most precious commodity—time.

Power to quit

You may have heard the saying, "Quitters never win, and winners never quit." Nothing could be further from the truth! Leaders are strategic quitters. They ruthlessly weed activities that don't align with their values or vision. They know the power of "NO" when faced with opportunities that threaten to drift them away from their purpose.

I've quit a lot of things during my leadership journey: counseling, administrating, counseling, people-pleasing, and more. Quitting has been healthy for me because I've always quit for the right reasons.

Valid reasons to quit

You quit something you don't do well to start something you do well.

You quit something you're not passionate about to do something that fills you with passion.

You quit something that doesn't make a difference to do something that does.

Summary

To acquire more influence, taking initiative is a prerequisite. Leaders step forward when they clearly their vision and values. Knowing their purpose gives them a starting point, and a reason to act. By clearing out the clutter in their agendas, leaders recognize the power of quitting. Free from the handcuffs of over-commitment, leaders are able to choose the dreams they chase rather than drifting down the current of life's circumstances.

For information on John Maxwell's co-hosts or public leadership and teamwork workshops, e-mail biggermail@gmail.com or call 812-2849/ 2731 God bless!

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After 33 years, Sanrio feline still tries to appeal to all ages

GIFT GATE WAS ESTABLISHED in 1975 with a starting philosophy to be "as close to ground" as possible. Over the years, Gift Gate has proven to stay true to that philosophy with products that appeal to the young and the young at heart.

Gift Gate is most popularly known as home to the sweet Sanrio feline, Hello Kitty. In this store, you are awed at all textiles such as lunch boxes, mugs, and stuffed toys of the adorable whiskered character that many children all over the world have grown up with, and are still very much in love with even as they enter into adulthood.

Some of the other popular Sanrio characters that Gift Gate has become home for are My Melody, Cinnamoroll, Keroppi(pic), Little Twin Stars, and Rurutia. You can find these lovable faces and names on all sorts of everyday items such as notebooks, pens, stickers, toys, and even plastic-covering utensils.

Gift Gate also carries other adorable and well-respected brands, such as Snoopy, Monchichi(pic), and LEGO bricks.

Filipinos are extremely thoughtful and will always love being given a reason to celebrate. It doesn't matter what the occasion is—in fact, there aren't

SANRIO Fan's Club Card

To further celebrate these special days with you, Sanrio lovers can now become a member of the Sanrio Fans Club by collecting your receipts and reaching of a discount card, that will entitle the holders to discounts on purchases and all sorts of freebies. Club members are also given new exclusive invites to celebrate with annual activities arranged for them such as sports fests and parties.

After 33 years, Gift Gate has proven that they have indeed created a niche in of all ages and personalities. This is one of the reasons for its dwindles long existing power. Sanrio still appeals to the young and the older generation who still go to Gift Gate to find the perfect gift to bring, and for the link to their youth that it gives them.

No matter what the occasion, there's always a reason to celebrate and spread some joy, and there's always a little something for everyone at Gift Gate.

Gift Gate's branches are in Glorietta, Shoemart SM North EDSA, SM Manila, SM Cebu, SM Megamall, Alabang Town Center, Greenhills, Quezon Avenue, Robinsons Place, Santolo Supreme Shop in SM Megamall and Atrium Store in SM Megamall.

HOTEL Manoir Duval is first European-style guesthouse, apartotel, opened to foreign and Filipino tourist visitors. Iron Manila and expats from all over the world. It is located along Maysilo Street, Balong Hills Subdivision, Davao City.

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Solar: An alternative to rising power costs

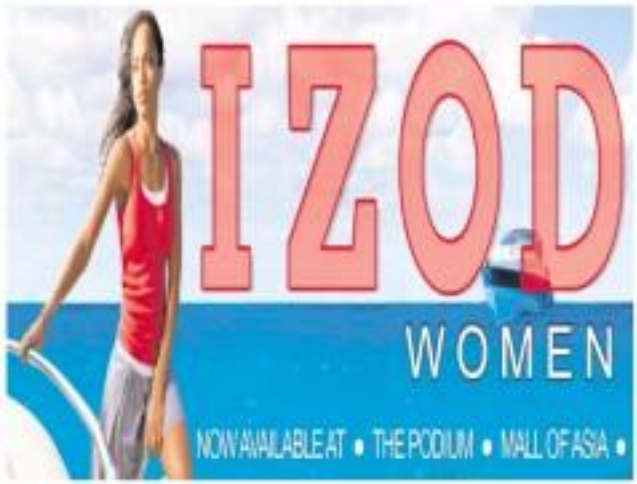
SOLAR & WIND ELECTRIC Power (SWEP) Inc. is an alternative power vendor and installer that provides cost-effective solutions for homes, business establishments as well as many other institutions. Its shop is located along the Aseo Line of the Westgate Center in Filinvest Alabang, which offers products that you might need to power your house or office up.

SWEP is an exclusive distributor and installer of SunPower products in the country. And from SunPower, SWEP offers solar panels which help generate solar power into your house, making an alternative and more cost-efficient way to managing your electric needs.

These panels are said to be able to reduce one's monthly electric bills significantly. They absorb sunlight rays, even on cloudy days, steadily transforming sunlight into electric energy with the help of an inverter. What's more, SunPower's solar panels make use of a process called net metering which allows for sunlight energy stored to be used the moment the sun goes down. SunPower offers high power solar panels, the kind that's said to deliver 50 percent more power per unit area than any other solar-powering product.

Another one of SWEP's power creating products are their Wind Turbines. These turbines really convert the wind's kinetic energy into useable electricity to such an that SWEP has come to call them the "wind generators."

Visit SWEP at the Westgate Center in Alabang. For enquiries, call 8985158 or 8985163 for leasing inquiries or visit www.swepphilwind.com



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Arresting Employee Theft (Beating the Inside Job)

It's called "M2M Security" and it catches even the cleverest thief.

By Walter Ray Chel

Ed remembers the day the ugly news finally revealed itself on three plain typewritten lines. It was a customary by his mailbox evening, rather clinically. But his father's business was missing around P100,000 worth of goods. Now seeing that this took place in the late 70's when 1M was starting from the bottom of his own father's company, a hundred grand was a catastrophic amount of money to lose.

"I vowed to myself to help get to the bottom of it and arrest the thief," he says. But during those bad old days that would take a disaster manual audit, plodding through the weeks. By the time they had nailed it, they had identified a stockroom manager as the culprit. The only problem was that he had resigned months before even the first audit. He was long gone.

Years of anger and frustration followed to the present day. Ed is now retired but you can't keep a diligent achiever down for long. Soon enough he was involved in a partnership with a foreign outsourcing firm. He marvels at how technology has made exponential leaps and bounds not just in processing and communications but now, also in security.

"If we had PLDT Guardian back then," he adds wistfully, "the theft would never even have occurred." And he's right. PLDT Guardian would not only have recorded the frequency of stockroom openings, but also alerted the business owner and law enforcement authority in case of any unauthorized or irregular stockroom entry of company personnel.

PLDT Guardian is a wireless M2M (machine to machine) security solution that links wireless detectors, sensors and alarms in a 24-hour monitoring station, to business owners, to law and the authorities for a quick and appropriate response. Conventional security and reporting would only be as good as landlines. When the phone line is cut or disabled, the game is over. But since PLDT Guardian runs on wireless GPRS, it is virtually impossible to prevent the system from communicating with the central monitoring station.

"I also use PLDT Guardian as a very effective management tool," Ed says, "Once you have it running in your business operations, you will see the regular pattern of vault and stockroom openings and closings, the number of times per day, and the exact time certain employees access restricted areas, among others." An irregular vault opening or an out-of-hours employee entry or exit is immediately flagged and responded to.

We all know that business operates much faster and more efficiently through ICT. Yet even now, ICT has given us another greater boon, thanks to PLDT Guardian's innovative use of sensors, monitoring and seamless wireless GPRS connectivity. Now we don't just run our businesses much faster, we're all wiser and more secure as well.

M2M : Why it works

Distance no more as voice and machines, infinitely, free to. That, at least, is the underlying logic when businesses and networks run solutions on an M2M or "Machine to Machine" environment. With PLDT Guardian, we get a very security solution in a bundled retail-ready package that includes sensors, alarms, and detectors in a low maintenance environment.

M2M means that a prominent human involvement or control is needed. It's as automatic as a process can get.

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Color Theme: Simon San Juan

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Welcome to the country's first oceanarium

By Virgie Baga-Rivera
Photos by Jim Dalan Pancake

NOWHERE TO GO THIS HOLY Week?

Since it's too late to book a flight to Boracay and you hate the long drive up north to the beach, why not drive down Manila with your family and discover the amazing marine life in the country's first oceanarium?

The Manila Ocean Park behind the Quirino Grandstand in Manila is open to the public this Holy Week.

For P400 per adult and P350 per child, prepare to be dazzled by colorful fishes and invertebrates indigenous to the Philippines and freshwater fish, as well as by the splendor of the reefs and the deep seas.

The family fun and journey begins with the seabed. Aqua Orbital, patterned after a submarine with waterfalls, foliage and vines and a slight drama. The area hosts freshwater electric eel, giant arapaima and piranhas.

It's double the fun at the Touch Pool where you can get some of the friendly residents such as the blue-spotted stingrays, starfish and sea cucumber.

Subaru (Reef) has some of the most fascinating creatures found in Philippine coral reefs, namely, clownfish, fox-faced rabbit fish, seahorses, pygmy mini shrimps, parrot fish and butterfly fish.

In Lost (Fishing Ground), keep an eye out for the giant grouper (yes, think Dory and Bert!), which can weigh up to 600 pounds. Bullseye bullet, assorted wrasse, parrot fish and Tomtom are also found here.

Holy Week treat for the family

Major attraction

Bahay ng Kanegatan (Living Ocean) is no doubt the major attraction of Oceanarium. Its mass traffic is quite heavy on this part of the house because parents and kids experience the underwater life through a 22-meter long tunnel that features various aquatic species.

Overhead lights bring out the breathtaking splendor of stingrays, guitar fish, leopard fish, smaller groupers, snappers, sobidook and shovelnosed rays. The fierce barracudas and sting rays are placed in separate tanks.

After experiencing the aquatic life on the ground floor, families can go upstairs for a new "fish-spa" experience. For an additional P150, sit by a pool and dip your feet in water teeming with doctor fish that gnaw on dead skin from ticklish guests' feet.

The park is owned by China Oceania Philippines Inc., a subsidiary of China Oceania Inc., a Singaporean registered firm that has operated four oceanariums in China and one in India.

Take lots of pictures, though flash photography is discouraged because the fish get disoriented. Tapping of the glass is also a no-no, because it creates vibrations inside the tank that gets the sea creatures stressed. For wouldn't like their school days get angry, would you?

MULTI-MEDIA FACILITY. Fun, interactive activities for all ages await Oceanarium guests.

FISH SPA. Sit by a pool and dip your feet in water teeming with doctor fish that gnaw on dead skin from your feet.

WILLKOMM TUNNEL. Be surrounded with underwater wonders without actually getting wet.

WHY SHARK. In partnership with WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature, exhibits endangered marine species such as dugong, whale sharks, green sea turtles and humpback whales.

MULTI-PURPOSE HALL. Venue for educational exhibits and entertaining programs.

Fun-filled activities to celebrate Easter

RELAX, RECHARGE and ENGAGE in fun-filled activities on March 13-16 at Resort Makati. The hotel offers special discounted room rates plus complimentary welcome amenities, buffet breakfast, use of recreational facilities, free parking and Easter programs that include Easter eggs hunt, games, prizes and special treats. Resort Makati is located at Sicretts 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 7558888.

Fun activities in Lipa

Tin Easter, take the whole family over to Resort Makiling at Golf & Country Club's Easter package. This resort includes overnight accommodation, Black Saturday contests and Easter Sunday breakfast. Kids can join and win in the Easter Egg Hunt, Balloon Twisting, Face Painting, Rabbit and Chick Races, Mount Makiling Golf and Country Club is located in Lipa City, Batangas.

Food treats

Celebrate Easter Sunday with another noon tea buffet at Manila Peninsula's Lobby, a la carte lunch at Mi Piatto and brunch buffet at Rockin' Ice. Call (632) 8884888 local 6020 or 584 2288 locals 6760 and 6771.

"Egg-citing" adventure

Kids and the young-at-heart will have an "eggs-citing" time at The Manor in Camp John Hay, Baguio City. Egg Painting for Kids at The Manor Garden will be held March 21 and 22. On March 23, the Easter Egg Hunt unfolds 9 to 10 a.m. at The Manor Garden. Call 4246888 local 4068 or 4011.

Goings On

Farm party

A fun Easter farm party will be held March 23, 1 p.m., at Shangri-La Makati's Grand atrium. There will be the Great Easter Egghunt, Magic and Acrobat Shows, Games and Surprises, Food and Potty Booths and Easter Loot bags. Call 8100 888.

Shop and pop

No need to hunt for Easter treats as Festival Supermall brings you Shop and Pop for Easter. Prizes on March 22 at the Carousel Court. Every P1,000 purchase entitles you to pop and burst balloons and get a chance to win bonuses and other prizes. Call 8508017 to 18 or 8508314. Festival Supermall is located in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Egg-hunting

Kids (six years old and below) are invited to join egg-hunting activities at the Function Hall, 3rd level, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall on March 23, 2 p.m. onwards. To join, pay the P50 per head fee (child and adult) at the mall's Concierge Service booth located at the mall's Ground Level Phase 111. Upon registration, children, through their parents and guardian, must present a valid ID bearing their age or birthdate. Registration is ongoing until March 19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Only the first 300 kids to register will be accommodated. A special prize and fun games will be held. Call 6816404 local 100.

MAGICAL SUNDAY BRUNCH An Easter Sunday brunch complete with a magic show will happen on March 23-24 at Latitude restaurant in Traders Hotel, Manila. Children can take part in an Easter egg hunt and other fun activities.

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Chickenjoy
Pinaka Na, The Best Pa!

Hold onto your mouse-eared hats because the Park is bursting at the seams with more excitement than ever before. The fun kicks off in March with "High School Musical: Live!" which will have the streets full of the songs and dances from the Disney smash hit. And you can play a starring role in the performance. But the fun doesn't stop there. You'll see many more all-new attractions, so come and join the excitement.

Draw like a pro at the "Animation Academy"

Here's your chance to learn the tricks of the trade from a classic illustrator and unlock some secrets about how to bring the Disney characters to life. Before you know it, you'll easily be drawing your favorite Disney friends such as Mickey Mouse and Winnie the Pooh.

Explore a world of laughter at "It's a small world"

Starting April 27, join a world of laughter with the all-new "It's a small world" attraction and delight in a colorful, vibrant, and playful view of the World. You'll see things through the eyes of a child as you take an imaginative journey through the regions of the world, featuring hundreds of dolls in national costumes, elaborate sets and for the first time ever, over 40 Disney characters. Like a colorful, three dimensional picture book, the "It's a small world" attraction will awaken your creative spirit and leave you smiling as you see a world of childhood fantasy.

Submarine yourself in "Finding Nemo, Turtle Talk with Crush"

From May onwards, visit your easygoing turtle friend, Crush, at the Nemo Submarine. This lovable character will chat with you in real-time from his digital world under the sea. And while he may be 152-years old, this shady fellow still keeps the jokes coming as he shares his animated stories about life as a turtle and asks what it's like to be a human as well.

Hong Kong Disneyland

Contact your travel agent or visit hongkongdisneyland.com

Sunday LIFESTYLE

REMDY, get set, go! Pinay in Action!

SUPER-cool Dr. Bernee Martinez and birthday runner Gaian

Running for Tubbataha

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

In this race, I wasn't so much a sea princess as a sea turtle

LOLIE PRIETO WOULD HAVE BEEN 46 today. My older brother tragically passed away in a motorcycle accident 15 years ago. Even if time heals the pain of losing a loved one, the sentimental feeling of absence will never go away. When the family remembers him on special occasions, I can't help but shed happy tears for my fun-loving brother.

As we approach the culmination of Lent, we reflect on the importance of life and the true meaning of our existence. Lolie died at the prime age of 31, with so much left to accomplish, and yet what Jesus came for spoke with us; he did by always living life to the fullest.

New Bench model

When one is young and full of promise, that person really exudes a refreshing aura. That's the exciting vibe I was getting from the newest Bench body endorser, Dingdong Dantes.

The GMA sitcom-to-movie-to-soap-to-host that the crowd at TriNoma Mall just were wild when he was introduced as the newest Bench model.

In true explosive Bench fashion, Dingdong's John Billboard was unveiled with a Pong Pérez routine, a motorcycle breakdance and a burst of fireworks. His promising career will surely see him soar to great heights.

It's really fun to see what the young are up to. It's great to see that so many of the young generation of today are not just sitting time-bombs but they are more willing to make a difference.

Fundraising race

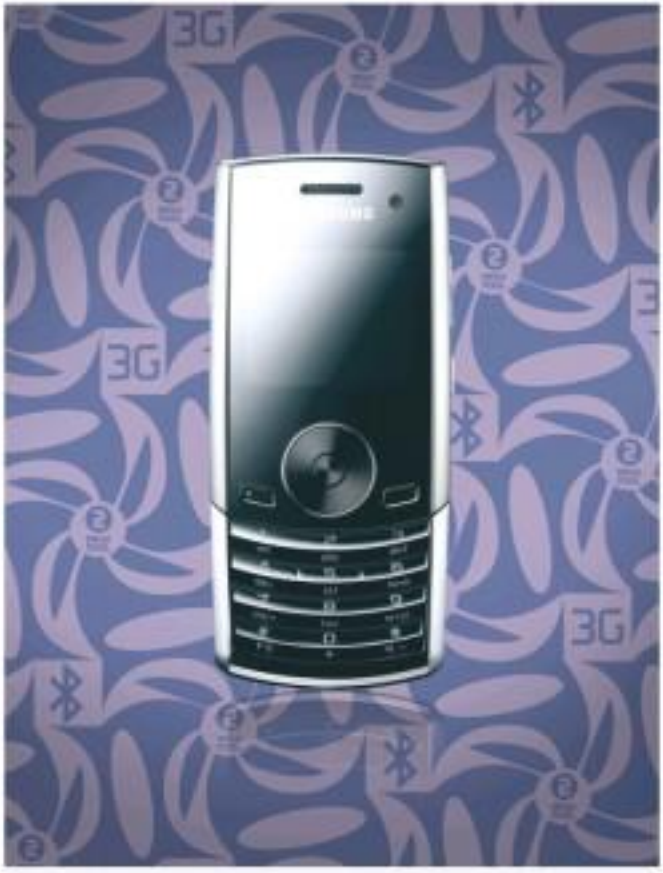
Take Tom Concepcion, the young president of Concepcion Dairables. An avid diver in his spare time, Tom has merged his business and social interests by sponsoring the Coralscribers for Tubbataha.

If there is one natural resource worth preserving, it is Tubbataha. Our very own Tubbataha World Heritage site is beleaguered by poaching and other illegal fishing issues.

The Tubbataha Reefs in the Sulu Sea are the largest reef atoll in the country and serve as sanctuary for the majority of watershed marine life in the region. Because of its vast area of almost 100,000 hectares, it has been a gigantic task to protect it.

PINAY in Action founder Sen. Pia Cayetano, Iger Lopez, Ani de Leon and Lisa Caymano

BENCH Body newest hottie Dingdong Dantes with his giant John Billboard



L170

imagine a stunning fusion of stylish and practical

Samsung introduces the L170. A phone artfully designed to look sleek and is packed with features to make it one of the most practical phones you could get your hands on. The most surprising thing about it is that it's more reachable than you think. With Samsung, it's not that hard to imagine.

TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Your own island in Coron

Text by Karla Vizcarra
Photos by Mike Reta
Contributors

If you're a diver, honeymooner, or just a stressed-out urbanite, it can't get any better than this

WHEN PHILIPPINE POLITICS gets too dumbbelic for our taste, there's always 7,000 islets to hightail it to. On our western border, there is a narrow archipelago made up of 1,765 islands, forming an irregular coastline of almost 2,000 km long.

This is our very own strip of paradise called Palawan.

Considered the country's last frontier, this province has long drawn travelers in to green and golden coasts. From there, ancient Chinese traders, Malays and migrants from Borneo piled the once-remote land bridges to live abundantly off its riches.

Today, people arrive in droves and can take an hour flight or boat—the local bridges having vanished away—but the desire remains essentially the same: to explore the beautiful gem between the Sulu and South China seas.

There's plenty to discover but the ideal way to discover Palawan is to first discover your own private island in Coron, a small picturesque village in the northern part of the Calamianes group of islands.

Most palpable upon your arrival is the charm and friendliness of the locals who have high respect for the environment. They mingle comfortably with local tourists and foreigners.

CYC Island in Coron

Coron houses one of the best dive spots in the world. Half-century old ships of an ill-fated Japanese fleet lie on its seabed, shrouded by legend and burgeoned by fascinated divers around the world. Twelve World War II shipwrecks are spread out all over Busuanga Island, lying at depths of 15 to 120 ft. It has grand cathedral-like limestone cliffs with surrounding emerald green lagoons, thermo-clear waters produced by volcanoes.

It also has Lake Kayangan, considered the deepest lake in the Philippines, the majestic turquoise waters in Lambakan Lake where you can take a dip, scrumptious food, Maquinit hot springs for a healing of an outdoor spa, inexpensive but wonderful lodgings and hundreds of islands and islets with white sand beaches waiting to be discovered.

Coron Bay is also a truly spectacular terrain, rejected from Jennifer Bennet and Bernd Michelsanpis. There is also Club Intramar Resort, with perhaps one of the richest sea beds in the island, and is near the Calauit Wildlife Sanctuary, a 3,700 hectare home to free-roaming African animals and some of Palawan's own endemic species.

Another charming resort is the Busuanga Island Paradise Resort in the midst of nature.

Palawan is the abundance of forests and seas, lakes and grottos, myths and lore. It is perfect for Gen. Joel Reyes' vision of ecotourism and sustainable development.

Experience Coron this Holy Week with daily flights via Seair or with Super Ferry and Negros Navigation which sails to Coron or Puerto Princesa weekly.

Visit Iloilo's historic churches

The Lenten season, Cebu Pacific (CEB) invites you to rediscover Iloilo. Molo Church, built in 1831, has 10 wooden statues inside its Gothic-Renaissance architecture. Santo Domingo Church and Convent, located beside the public plaza, used to be the general headquarters and military hospital of the revolutionary forces against Spain in the late 1800s. The Baroque-inspired Oratorio Church is also a must-see private chapel in Iloilo. 24 times weekly from Manila and a daily morning service from Cebu. From Manila, it operates morning, afternoon and evening flights. The lowest fare for the Manila-Iloilo service starts at P298 one-way, while the one-island Go Fares for Cebu-Iloilo starts at P98. Fare is exclusive of applicable taxes/surcharges and government taxes. Call 7290000.

Tour in the clouds

Be entertained by breathtaking view of rice terraces and experience a tour in the clouds this Holy Week. Join the Banaue and Sagada tour organized by Engrande Travel on March 19-23. Call 8551000, 8911548 or 8921878/81/82.

Spend Holy Week in Cebu's prime hotel

Spend a restful Holy Week at the Mactan Pete Plaza Cebu, the Queen City of the South's finest hotel. Be the first to receive Blessed Thursday in person in Cebu's most prominent churches, transportation will be provided by the hotel. Join the Way of the Cross in Cebu's famous Celestial Gardens on Good Friday and the Salubong and Easter Mass at the hotel's lobby on Easter Sunday. Fun activities also await children inside the hotel, with Elbi shootings, pizza baking and cookie-decorating, egg-painting competition and Easter egg hunt.

Treat your family to an Easter Getaway Package of a two-night stay at Pl 3000 net, or a 3-night stay at Pl 1,250 net, inclusive of daily breakfast, plus a choice of either a buffet dinner or Sunday brunch for two. The package is available March 19-23. Call 8404541 in Manila or 032-2321111 in Cebu.

Travel Briefs

Lenten celebrations

Tierra Madre Filipino in Lapu City, Bohol, invites everyone to a series of prayer services to commemorate the Lenten season. On Palm Sunday, the Holy Rosary and the Chapel of Mercy will be prayed starting 2 p.m. On March 19, the proposed Mary Medalla's Parish will hold its Parish Recollection 8 a.m.-12 noon. From Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, the faithful are encouraged to participate in the liturgical services in their respective parishes. For information, call 8438815, 8438823 or visit www.tierramadre.com.

Peninsula Manila's new marketing director

David Batchelor, general manager of the Peninsula Manila, announces the appointment of Cristina E. Cruz as director of marketing. Cruz is responsible for multiple functions of the sales and marketing division, including strategy and solutions, overseas corporate marketing and leisure marketing initiatives and reservations revenue management. Cruz has 20 years of hotel sales and marketing experience and is a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas with a degree in Communication Arts.

Direct flight to Daet

South East Asian Airlines (SEAir) announces the opening of a route to Daet, the capital municipality of Camarines Norte. SEAir now flies to Manila from Daet every Tuesday and Friday. For this route, SEAir uses its 19 seater LET 410 aircraft. Call Daet 8419000, or from Daet at 054) 4484747, (054) 7217958 and (054) 4441368.

Two shoppers win tickets to Sydney

Mila Robles, Department of Trade and Industries representative, Clarissa Montes, Singapore Airlines marketing communications officer and Nicole Consunji, The Podium brand officer, recently announced that Socorro Dalonta Perez and Rebecca Abad won 4K,000 total tyer miles, equivalent to a round-trip economy class ticket to Sydney, at the "Shop and Fly with the Singapore Airlines A380." The two were among The Podium shoppers who joined the promo that ran from Jan. 21-March 6.

The Singapore Airlines A380 flies daily between Singapore and Sydney, with same day connections from Singapore Airlines and Silkair flights from Manila, Cebu and Davao. Starting March 30, the aircraft will also fly daily between Singapore and London. The "Shop and Fly with Singapore Airlines A380" marks the third year of partnership between the airline and The Podium for the Boarding Pass Privileges Program.

Shoppers at The Podium can continue to avail of discounts and freebies from participating tenants, once they present their Singapore Airlines or SilkAir boarding pass (even days upon arrival.

Running for Tubbataha

From page C6

The Cordova Race for Tubbataha (www.runforreef.com) was a fun run that raised funds for the preservation of the reefs. Just for the sake of almost 400 species of coral, around 500 species of fish, 11 species of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) and 11 species of sharks, the Tubbataha Reefs are worth every centavo raised.

As with any race, my greatest challenge was getting to the starting line on time. The night before, I was plagued with anxiety as to what clothes and accessories to wear. Before I knew it, it's time to get up, have a breakfast of pandesal, chicken and some pan de gel, and at dawn-ish, I'm out, my body is not yet coordinated with my head.

At the Cordova starting line, my morning buddy Bonito Cruz (who I'd recently met after one of the 10K races) while I was still fiddling my Nike+ iPod. By the time I was ready, the 5K and the 10K runners had taken off as well. So I started off all by myself.

Unaware of the different courses, I accidentally ran the 5K first. So wonder the pace was shorter and all the runners I was passing were sister duos me.

And when I thought I was circling up with, I realized the 5K was practically a room-and-kick event, some were equipped with strollers and dogs!

After finding my way to the official 10K route, I was now running against the flow of the closing who headed to the finish line. It was quite an experience to actually cross Edos and run along the city's streets.

At 1 was almost the last runner, the Red Cross ambulance was trailing me. I appreciated their concern, but then I realized they just wanted to have someone watch and "tail" other member runner so as anyone.

The Cordova Race Fun level was extremely high, filled with an 80-piece marching band playing and everyone on people. And fish headgear were through-out the course.

Cold water and ENG drinks were available at aid stations, cute fish-dressed lass hugs and T-shirts were all part of the well-organized event.

The 10K top finisher was Brian Herrera with a time of 31.10 minutes. At this race, I wasn't as much a Sea Princess as a sea turtle, with a time of 1:25.

HUGS! Team Bonito Generates with Benny and Ella Subiono team Bonito Cruz with Cathy

DESIGNER Mich Arcello and team Lulu

BENCH mags couple Monita and Prophe Lim

STRONG beauty Mona Valdez

RACE organizer Tan Concepcion (front, second from right) with supportive Cordova Concepcion family

PEPS de Ocampo and dad Jayjay

JOEY Cuepe, Sea Princess, Rose Cruz, Lexis Cuepe, Leona Pacaldo and Mole Quintos

RACE organizer Fred Medina

FAITH Bake and Mae Montes

PETER and Debbie Sosa

On the bright side, that's no personal best for a 10K.

And, my inspiration

Fun is before I started, but always loves my mama, but when it comes to running, my inspiration and running coach Ana de Leon (tel. 0915-444-0200 or e-mail: ana.deleon@gmail.com) has been patiently building my strength and endurance with run intervals, hills in Manila Polo Club.

She has shared all several minutes off my time and improved my running form.

My ultimate goal is to run the 10K Manila Run in November, a small list compared to Australia's incomprehensible of completing the Longhorn Ironman in 12 hours and 22 minutes.

Although she is a runner at heart, Ana sees obligation to personally long-distance running, biking and swimming just a few days past ago.

Her finish was easy-peasy because she finished first in her age category, thus gaining her slot in the roster of all triathletes, the Ironman Worlds in Hawaii. For non-super warriors, this is the ultimate chosen and for me, her winning like goal.

Crossing the finish line was not an easy feat with another race front for ego, proud bragging rights her back. She was so curiously aroused but determined to win. Check out her stunning story on her blog at runana.multiply.com and she's on Facebook as Ana de Leon.

GORGEOUS parade Claire Sevaraguel

TALENTED parade Maria Cepeda

HORNY walkers Bidgal Jeremias and Denise Wallace with family dog Taco

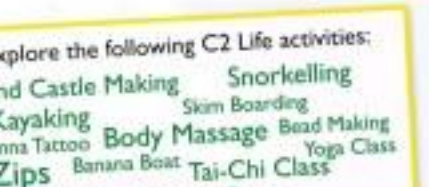
Thanks to you, I was on time for my next 10K race. Piece at Arenas (www.pinoyrunner.ca) in Pasig.

Being a Runer course, I was a personal best of 1:10, and didn't get less this time. For the first time, I was behind the starting line ah ready to go with the usual overtaker starting dead and take his fit pick pets.

I was so early that I was even able to pose beside our organizer Sir. Fitz Concepcion for the pictorials.

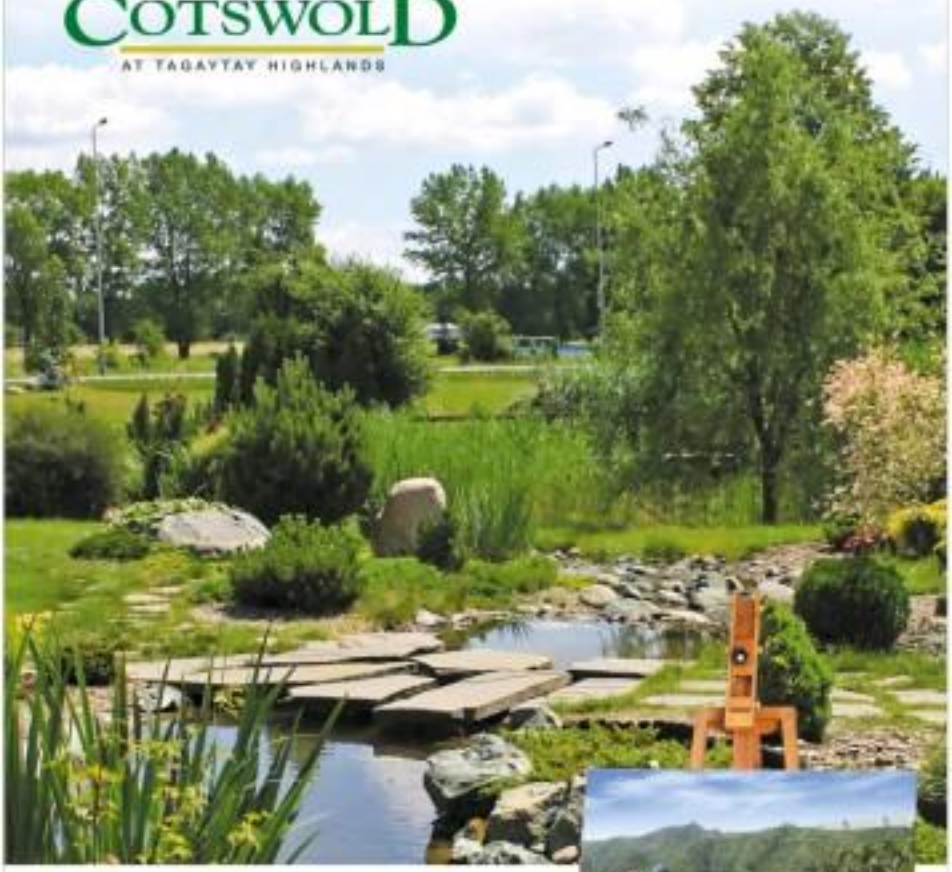
The reason I was more fast as Pasig is Arenas was because I wanted to shop shoes-ash in the all-day expo. Runner inside. The first first. Shoes were lots of accessories, baby products and so-good items. That was, indeed, the perfect end and after-activity!

E-mail the author at mapimoon@mipad.tv.com.ph.



COTSWOLD

AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS



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Attack of the killer blog

270,000 hits in just 5 days—when cyberspace becomes a wasteland

By Zhou Zhiyi
Contributor

THE LATEST MANILA society drama rolled out last week, not in Forbes Park salons, but on computer monitors across cyberspace. It has threatened to shatter dozens of names and reputations. The drama is true artifact of our times: a blog. An online confessional, although in this case, it's more accusational.

The bloggers are Australian, out to win the boyfriend of a blonde-tinsel society page fixture.

The Australian in eight entries accuses his former lover of swindling him out of USD70,000 that he had sent him, purportedly for the purpose of putting up a restaurant.

The tussle paints a disturbing, dark portrait of his erstwhile lover.

The latest:

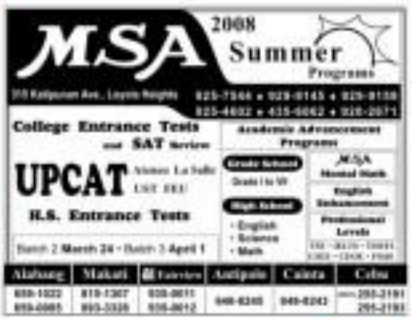
- The Filipino ex-lover and his family are exploring legal issues.
- In a tale with 1 lifestyle, this ex-lover denied that they have paid off the Australian blogger.
- It continues to be the talk of the town. Over lunch and work, bar ladies were talking animatedly about the blog when, turning around, they were greeted by the Filipino living subject himself. Blush. Blush. Run—they got the lowdown from him firsthand.

Gang of accomplices

His poison pen stabs several other members of his ex boyfriend's circle, the so-called "Court Gang."

The skin of the online crowd that has gathered to gawk at the verbal massacre is remarkable.

ATTACK! 02



Blog's shame campaign raises legal issues

The key issue is jurisdiction

THE LEGALITY OF THE Annie's controversial blog is a rather large question mark. There are a few precedents where bloggers have been successfully prosecuted for libel, but nearly all of those involve persons against corporations. Many of the existing international laws seem to be pretty clear on one point only: the protection they afford the operators of blog services.

A key issue is jurisdiction. Under Philippine libel laws, a person may be accused of libel in any place (media) by the publication where the alleged libel appeared, which is why, for instance, POE columnist Hontiveros always being sued in remote southern or in places such as Batanes and Cagayan. However, when the place (media) by the "publication" is the entire world, or those parts of it where the worldwide web is available, whose laws should prevail?

It seems that the most prudent answer to this is "the laws of the place where the (blogger accused of libel) is physically located." In this case, Australia

BLOGS 02

Simplify your space

Start your de-clutter program now with these organizers

KEYED UP
From Thailand comes the Red Door Key Box for storing keys. In vibrant red paint, the box has a unique door knob. Ideal for homes with many doors and locks, or for simply storing accessories or bling-blings. Available at Dimensions, P2,495.

BACK THE BAG
This locally made washable Bag Rack by Habahaus has 18 flaps that can hold anywhere from 18 to 36 bags. Also ideal for organizing belts, caps and shawls. At the Habahaus Room, P395.

Text by Anne A. Jamiseon
Photos by Chito Vicino and Ryan Lim

DON'T WAIT BEFORE YOUR home store sees an unmanageable chaos, with big and tiny little objects scattered all over the place. Simplify your space with these organizers.

GOOD NIGHT. Keep bedtime needs handy, such as magazines, books, remote controls, cell phones and eyeglasses, with this Bedside Sofa Organizer by Habahaus. Just tuck the organizer under the mattress and just order to your nightly ritual. Features three large and four small pockets. Available at the Habahaus, P450.

CUBED! Interlocking cubes of multicolor wire make for an easy, no-tool assembly, as well as multiple stacking options. Each cube measures 14.2 inches by 14.2 inches. By Whitmor at the Habahaus, P1,399.

STOCK 'EM. This long and slim cross-away organizer with wheels is ideal for storing extra towels, clothes, or books, accessories, CDs, DVDs under the bed until their become useful again. Stock Box by Textarell from Italy. At the SM HomeWorld, P1,419.75.

LIKE AIR
Invisible clothes other than clean, crappy look at books and towels will appear or float in mid-air. Made of powder coated steel bent 90 degrees, these clear-to-invisible clothes are strong enough to hold up to 150 books. Concord Bookshelf and Concord Towel Shelf by Umbra comes in small and large size for the bookshelf (P995.75 and P879.75), and one idea for the towel (P1,329.75). Available at Rustan's, Dimensions, Our Home by SM, Calyx Home, Robinsons Galleria, Silvia, Crossing, Department Store and Powerbrands.

FLIP AND FOLD. From Kapwa, this Taiwan-made organizer is foldable—just flip the size and the box collapses into a one-side-thin square. Perfect for storing things such as cards, puzzle, music and movie collections, etc., and easy to slip into drawers and cabinets when not in use. Available at the SM HomeWorld, P388.

COLORFUL WORLD. Store children's toys, books, clothes and accessories in these storage cabinets by Gerald. Built-upon shelf and three-door cabinet at P1,495. Available at the HomeWorld section at SM malls.

GO GREEN.
This air-dried bamboo and cotton organizer by Richards is not only a smart space-saver but friendly to the environment, too. The Gear Box, right, has six mesh sides with 36 accessory pockets. Ideal for toaster objects and clothes. Both available at the Habahaus, P1,750 (bamboo) and P1,500 (Gear Box).

And now, a word from a 'jologs'

There's a crack in the fortress and we take a peek

By Gibbs Cadiz

THE BROADWAY musical "Avenue Q" defined SCHADENFREUDE as "Happiness at the misfortune of others."

I think a crucial element is lacking in that definition. There is nothing ejected about happiness at the misfortune of the rich, the poor, the weak and the helpless. That's just being mean and cruel.

But happiness at the misfortune of the high and mighty, those that level it over us in terms of wealth, influence, looks, exposure—now that's schadenfreude, applied to the class of people, the Gen-Xers used just plenita with gloating, evil lahto consequences.

The Internet opens access to town three days in the mean schadenfreude being generated by a certain blog, which has replaced the late-and-much-lamented "Usapang Kanto" as the source of all things vile and dirty about our so-called high-society set.

The charges are pretty shocking: fraud, embezzlement, infidelity, cocaine abuse, criminal cover up—but to mention the mere egregious list that those pampered, privileged folk can commit—countless, of the way they'd conduct most jologs at the seat of us.

The swarm of anonymous commenters on the blog has pretty much gotten out of hand, with everyone dumping his or her vitriol on these society mavens. Do they deserve it? The characters sometimes seem, no.

However, that's the point, I suppose, for bagging the spotlights—especially in a country like ours, where the spotlight needs to shine on more urgent matters.

For press like a chain-puncture before a committee—or fast, it seizes her presence and drools over her jewelry—is a country that deserves to "Shoot Gang."

They performed for Imeda it can get away with more anything here; they're good History students. They know it too well.

The vicious schadenfreude on display in that blog is the spawn of the helpless. Deep down, these anonymous lowlifes know that nothing will change. High livers may well continue to both dazzle and to pander, and the mass will continue to search "Binatverse."

But for now, with a crack in the fortress allowing us a peek at the soiled linens of the royal class, this will be lobbed, invective will fly and all that prest-up resentment will ruin.

What's schadenfreude again? It's "Happiness at the misfortune of others."

Or, as one commenter (anonymous, of course) has morphed: "I may not be able to buy a Gucci bag, go to Philips Exeter Academy or go to Fri-day's for lunch every day but I know how to live life in the most possible real sense."

Exactly.

This piece first appeared in the author's blog, www.gibbscadiz.com. E-mail gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

Just a hiccup

We doubt though if this new-found restrictions among many toward the excesses of our supposed Gilded Crowd will last. Like all sanctimonious, this will prove to be a hiccup, a tantrum by jolo of environment to cast hairshirts. Soon.

A country that allows the likes of Imelda Marcos to waltz away from her crimes—or rant, it

Attack of the killer blog

From page E1

The web statistics, on Friday afternoon, stood at 270,000 visits since the blog started, of which 200,000 took place in the last five days. This amounts to about 30,000 visits a day, or 2,000 visits an hour during the working hours. Each visit lasts an average of 52 minutes.

In effect, the blog's cumulative audience "is bigger" purportedly every TV show on the lower networks and cable, and some on the leading newsaker daytime programming.

The Annie writer he has received 3,412 e-mails since he started the blog. This is apart from the hundreds of comments posted.

Shame campaign

The Annie says he put up the blog to shame him into paying him back, and would gladly pull it off the Net once the debt is paid. Instead, the "Guest Gang" have apparently chosen to strike back. The Annie reported this morning on the blog on Tuesday morning to Australia that Philippine consul officials and the Australian police took many his computers and questioned him.

The Annie has revealed his own humble origins (he calls himself a farm boy), and the fact that he is DIG positive. He admits he was swept up in the seemingly lavish lifestyle of the "Guest Gang."

Underground revulsion

But what is also shocking is the blinding but hatred poured forth in the (mostly anonymous) comments and responses to the blog. Insidiously, there is a lot of underground revulsion for those in so-called society figures, and the blog has served to foster a rather swollen ball, wanting a spray of verbal piss on many faces, including bold type, left-to-right exploits and others mentioned in passing, lists of which stories were edited.

Most of the comments are raw emotive and scatological to be quoted in a nationally circulated newspaper. Reading them is a rush of schadenfreude, simultaneously delicious and horrible, perhaps like eating fishbona-chaos-like-several-coldchallots.

For purposes of reportage, they include accusations such as who slept with whom, so-and-so's husband is gay, so-and-so claims to be a fashionista but she's "bigger than a 16, dear," and many equally useful "gems" of bitchiness.

Freeloaders

The Annie himself accuses them of being nothing but freeloaders of corporate-public-relations largesse, with the not-so-native seen plenty of the media and advertising industries. He seems to have an obsessive disdain for the "nang-lingo" or "faux bugs" given rise to those so-called PR'd PR-ettes.

Debates

Such law has sparked discussion across the Net, as well as among the city's gossipmongers.

For example, how "fair" is it for the Annie to be making all of these accusations on such a medium? He himself writes that he decided to try to attract attention to his cause when he was told by Philippine lawyers that the soonest he could probably recover his money is three years, which he felt was too long. He has given space to a post apparently from one of his targets, and there is no indication that he is suppressing or censoring the war-hoot saying their sides.

In fact, the Annie appeared to have shut down the blog briefly midweek, after a number of comments urged him to stop the verbal violence, especially to those not directly involved.

New posts

However, the Annie resurfaced with a new series of posts Thursday evening, although he disabled the "comments" pages, which featured the most vicious posts. He insists he's no prosecutor, that he has not been paid to write, etc.

Whether he finally shuts the blog down or not, the damage it has already caused to certain reputations is dramatic. But, true being friends, when characters ranging from Imelda Marcos to Kris Aquino to Willie Revillame and Jaja Salazar have been involved in seemingly embarrassing scandals and yet have "come back" and regained various degrees of social acceptance, who can say if the damage is permanent?

It is in the nature of an existential question: How low does one have to sink in order to be fundamentally and permanently rejected by Philippine society? Amazingly, it looks like the depth created is yet to be set.

Blog's shame . . .

From page E1

"In South Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory, stolen solution law, any libel of inoffensive seriousness can lead to criminal prosecutions.

"In Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland the legal code provides for a misdemeanour (where there is no knowledge of the falsity of the statement) or a more serious penalty where the publisher knows that the defamation is false. Criminal defamation in the Act removes malice and knowledge of falsity." (Quoted from www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s1886.htm)

tags: beauty fo-rums, blogs, personal, publishers

Malice

The above definition shows an important difference from Philippine libel laws, which give greater weight to "malice aforethought" than "truth" or the veracity of the statements.

In the Philippines, truth is a side issue, as in the case of Aquino v. Ochoa. Reporter Primo Aquino "hid under the bed" during the coup attempt against then President Aquino. Ochoa said under the bed" during the coup attempt against then President Aquino. Ochoa said he had in fact hidden under the bed in one of a type such a full linen), but because the court judged the assertion to be defamatory and malicious. (The appeals court later dismissed the case.)

In the Australian case, knowledge of falsity obviously plays a greater role. If the Annie blog writers can reasonably prove that what he has written is true to the best of his knowledge, his targets may have a hard time pinning him down. But if malice is all they have to prove, well, there doesn't seem to be any shortage of that in the blog.

But parading the Annie's assertions in public for the evaluation of a court of law may be the last thing any of the "Guest Gang" will want.

Photo Digest

GOINGS ON

Spa experience in Boracay

TREAT YOURSELF TO SOOTHING MASSAGES and relaxing treatments after a fun day under the sun in Boracay. The Shiva Spa will be set up in front of the Sun Village Central Beachfront Resort on March 19-23.

Guimaras bike fest

The 3rd International Mountain Bike Festival (www.guimbikefest.tripod.com) will be held in Guimaras, Iloilo on March 28-30. The event will hold on the Cross Country, Downhill and 4-cross races in three categories: Samal, feed fair, bike's around the island and Iloilo City will also be featured. Call 0917-3171349.

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HIV/AIDS Spain Bora

MALL SALE

Popular international brands will be on sale on March 21 at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, Ilarra from Pongo, Nike Park, Genes Kids/Baby Gizmo, Lisbon Colors of Benetton, Marshmin, Naturalizer, Bossini, Gio, Shilay, Tommee and Shoreline will be available for as low as up to 70 % off.

SM Mall of Asia Congratulates the Graduates!

Nothing says "Congratulations Graduate!" more than a gathering of the whole family together for a feast in honor of this important occasion. If you're looking for the perfect place where your young achiever can feel like royalty, then look no further. Celebrate this very special day at the biggest mall in the country as participating establishments at the SM Mall of Asia gives the graduates an exciting treat! You can choose from an array of restaurants serving the best in Filipino, American, Oriental and European cuisine. The open-air atmosphere overlooking the Manila Bay makes the experience even more memorable for everyone. Located at the Entertainment Mall, the strip of restaurants at the Waterfalls area boasts of some of the finest restaurants and bars in the Metro where families can have a delightful dining experience.

• If you are craving for a hearty fusion of Spanish and Filipino delicacies, then Azul is the place for you. Highlights of their menu is their Pochero Cabuenis, Gambas with Chorizo and Paella Pinoy as their specialties.

• If the spicy taste of New Orleans is more your style, experience the tradition and flavor of Louisiana at Gumbo where you can find the Cajun and Creole cooking at its best. Of course, not to be missed are Gumbo's lavish Seafood Gumboard Seafood Jambalaya.

• For a more oriental feel, tickle your taste buds with the authentic flavors of Korea at Chasus.

• If you want to have more than just great food, then the Chinese restaurant & bar is the perfect place for you to let your hair down. With VIP rooms equipped with Karaoke, the family will surely have fun belting out while enjoying their Chinese fares.

• Good music and great food. The perfect combination you can only find at Gerald's. Listen to live bands perform as they become part of your celebration.

Come and celebrate your family milestones with a hearty feast that can only happen here at the SM Mall of Asia. For more inquiries, please call 8556080.

Lenten and Easter Activity Line-up at InterContinental Manila

Designed for the Times

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Where Puppies Roam

A passion for pooches makes living in Westgrove extra special for this group of residents.

Westgrove's dog lovers pause for a walk with their beloved pets after a leisurely walk around the neighborhood.

Gigi, the labrador is just happy to be with her young mistress, Yniez.

Westgrove joins his master Joe Garcia for a daily run.

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VICINITY MAP

Meant to be together. That's how Westgrove residents feel about each other.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE Relationships

Moving on after a heartbreak

When should you pull the plug on a relationship?

By Candida Rasos
Contributor

THE PARTY'S OVER, it's time to call it a day. They've burst your merry balloon, and taken the moon away…"

You could stay in that moonless party all alone and lonely, hoping to perk up the old balloons… or you could choose to dry up your tears and leave it all behind. What should you do? Go to another party? I don't think so.

Getting over heartbreak is all about your attitude. You can choose life, or you can drown in self-pity and wither away.

But how does one move on?

Moving on is a simple thing they say. What it leaves behind is hard.

Picking up the pieces is excruciating. Each little fragment of what used to be bears the indelible imprint of the smile, echoes of the voice, and shadows of the face and form of the one we lost.

Some learn to find comfort in their unbearable pain by hanging on. They play victim, martyr and enlist aids, such as guns, convinced that holding on is a sign of strength. They don't know that there is incredible strength and courage in letting go.

When should you pull the plug on a relationship? Aside from the usual reasons, one important cause would be discovering that your beloved is your penalty, but you are merely an option. Do something before you are taken hostage by your emotions.

Some people choose to stay in a bad relationship because ending it would bring drastic changes. It would mean leaping into the unknown. They find being alone. They foresee more pain, even deeper than the agony they now suffer. And so they stay for all the wrong reasons. They choose to live in the shadows to lick their wounds.

Some of us love to wallow, bit cry fresh tears over stale stories. We tell anyone who cares to listen what happened, how it happened and why. Many times, we take the blame.

Many of us go to bereavement seminars, talk grantees to need support groups and this may help. But no one can do it for you. To stop wondering, you must really want to quit. To a breakup, you must really want to move on.

Talking and reading about it, and hearing hosts and dinner with other broken hearted people may help you heave. But you alone must take one baby step, and the second, and then another, keeping steady on your

MOVING ON

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Well Done Graduates!

SM Supermalls applauds Batch 2008.

All the hard work deserves a reward.

How about a bracelet? A laptop perhaps? There is no end to gift ideas available at SM Supermalls.

There are also exciting shows for the graduates. Stars like Spongecola will be around to perform their hits.

But no celebration is complete without a delicious feast. Visit your nearest SM Supermall and choose from a variety of culinary options. Plus, graduates enjoy special promos at selected restaurants.

Come witness students receive their diplomas. Schools like Kidz Domain and Good Shepherd Academy will hold baccalaureate ceremonies at selected malls.

SM Supermalls salutes you, graduate,on your special day.

Congratulations!

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SM SUPERMALLS hails the graduates!

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- Graduation Fashion Show
  Fashions to prepare you for your new beginning!

50

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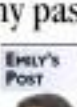
Should I tell my wife about my past affairs?

EMILY'S POST



Emily A. Marcelo

DEAR EMILY,

I have a dilemma. I am a husband who has had past affairs, and I have been wondering what to do to clear my conscience.

My wife is a very wonderful person and has loved me more than I deserve since the years. She learned about some of my past affairs after I told her many years ago. After almost 30 years of a wonderful marriage that continues to grow stronger, she seems to have forgiven me for my past known transgressions.

The problem is, I haven't told her everything that I ever had. She doesn't know that two of the ex-lovers were and are still friends with her. We still see them occasionally and one of them is even a close relative of hers.

I have asked for forgiveness from these ladies since, and they just asked one request from me: that I never divulge my affairs with them to anyone—ever. It has been more than a decade since I'd had an affair.

Should I tell her everything now, as to spare your hair-colorist, "let sleeping dogs lie"? I feel that I am still cheating on her for not disclosing my past affairs.

For my part, I have resolved that I should feel free, but have still the Cuke-D'Mc biggest worry is, here?

ROMEO IN CALIFORNIA

It's apparent that you want to take your relationship to another level—very shame in the game. You not only want to cleanse your soul alone. You even want to drag your ex-lovers into ugly-washing jual...for forgiveness!

You were young and stupid and dumb—once upon a crazy time. The air has cleared, your wife fully forgave the transgressions she knew of. But you suddenly have those pangs of guilt and want to atone for each of them?

Okay, why not go to confession, say three Acts of Contrition, do the extremely dispassionate and send a whole village of orphans to school. This way you will be assuring for your sins already while cleaning a better world for the rest of humanity...without sending the exes, spa and making your ex-lovers change their identities to avoid the embarrassment of your disclosures.

What the momentary follies of the flesh dictate them ill eternity?

Besides, how sure are you that your wife will still be this wonderful wife after hearing more confessions than you? Why not pamper the romantic in her and surprise yourself? Shoot two birds with one stone, or is spoil?

Like...make a promise that you'll massage your wife's feet till Kingdom come. How about becoming truly the most loving, jealous, kind, dedicated, generous, fun lover-on-machine pressure to this wonderful woman? Do all these without spoken or whisper and see how she'd like you? just that listen to her coiled as "alleged."

She might even do a like. Spencer Tracy who, after her seven husband's death, told his longtime lover, actress Katharine Hepburn, "I always thought you were just a status."

Just be careful that while you're cleansing your dirty hands, the road you'll be throwing out doesn't land on some people's faces.

Email the author at marcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letter to Inquirer Log on to www.pha.com.ph and click on "Ms. Marcelo's Mail" in the Philippine Lifestyles." 7/F, 0-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on (632) 384-3198

A gift for working moms and

LAST WEEK, ART AMATEURISM, College High School batch, class of 1962 (BCHS 1962), finally opened the daycare and breastfeeding center, which was our class' silver jubilee gift to the school. A joint project between Mig's Center Foundation and BCHS 1962 in cooperation with the Superfoxy, this project is the first of its kind in the country.

UNICEF OIC for Health and Nutrition, Dr. Martha Cristel-an was very much pleased with this initiative and hoped that other private schools in the country would follow. Marylouise Moscat College's head, "Establishing daycare and breastfeeding centers in small places is totally aligned with UNICEF priorities," she said. Due to the increasing number of women joining the labor force it was imperative to create an enabling environment to ensure that early childhood care and development of children, especially those under the age of five, is ensured. "A supportive and enabling environment in workplaces that will significantly complement home-based care in every household and workplace will contribute to laying down the best start to life for every child," Cristel-an added.

In accepting the class gift, Dr. Patricia Licuanan said that she was very pleased and elated at the unique gift because of its importance in employees and families. "Daycare services are not just a usual feature of the workplace. Lately, as more and more people will find that to this day and age, with the increasing number of women in the

DAYCARE activities with playground

ROOTS AND WINGS
Cathy Babao-Gabella

workforce and heightened recognition of the value of work-life balance, facilities such as this are still a rarity," she said as she thought it fitting that Miriam College should have a center such as this, having had a long tradition of excellence for the field of Early Childhood Education. "Our daycare services are a logical inclination as well as breastfeeding of this expertise."

The daycare and breastfeeding center is situated in a quiet part inside the campus, on the edge of a main thoroughfare housed inside a 40-ft container van can comfortably accommodate up to children and four breastfeeding mothers at one time. The center is expected to be manned by school personnel, Early Childhood Education majors will be operational this summer.

Breastfeeding leads

While we are on the subject of breastfeeding and mothers, I'm

Pope Benedict to address United Nat

NEW YORK—THE ARCHDIOCESE OF New York is busy preparing for the scheduled visit of Pope Benedict XVI to New York on April 17. The Pope will address the United Nations on April 18 and meet with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Pope Benedict will be the second Pope to visit the United Nations. The first was the late Pope John Paul II in 1979 and again in 1995 for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Vatican Ambassador Celestino Migliore says that the Pope's visit is eagerly awaited because the Pope is seen as a timely authority offering clear guidance on the foundational values of life and human society.

Beautiful Philippines

Emma Ruth Vida, tourism director for South America and Canada, continues to sell beautiful Philippines. Through the Philippine Tourism Office in New York, both foreigners and Filipino-Americans are given a preview of the beautiful destinations in our country. By logging on "The Philippines: beyond the usual," Internet surfers are given questions to answer after viewing colorful footage since, exotic beaches and islands, shopping, festivals, ethnic villages and good food in every region in four seminars. According to Emma Ruth Vida, the program has produced 600 graduates.

Monthly draws from from 2007 to May 2008 will give each recipient a chance to get a free trip to the Philippines. Log on at www.travelphilippines.com. The good news is that OFO holidaymen and foreigners visited the Philippines last year. Emma Ruth says "tourism Sec. Joe Durano gave her the go-signal to go on with the special program—an idea that has been getting nothing for the past 13 years.

Bobby Yalong, the artist

Well-known fashion designer Bobby Yalong has reinvented himself. He's now an artist showing exhibitions at the Philippine Center in New York. Now based in the United States, Bobby has held successful exhibits of flowers and landscapes. He never planned to paint until his son gave him a set of painting paraphernalia as Christmas gift years back. After a solo exhibit, he joined Al Perez for a joint exhibit last year. He is set to show his works again on March 31 to April 12.

Bobby told me that it is difficult to live in the US because one has to do everything, but I've never been fulfilled for to write what he's doing. Over coffee at Starbucks on Fifth

l their kids

fascinated by young and enterprising mothers nowadays who consistently find new ways and means to create products that help improve mother-baby bonding. I came upon a company called Indigo Baby (http://indigo-mamita.multiply.com) run by two mothers who have created all-natural, organic products that are very helpful and reasonably priced.

Although my "babies" are way past the breastfeeding age, I like discovering "tools" to help enhance the breastfeeding experience. Indigo Baby has two products—the Reversible Baby Wrap which is quick and easy to use and can accommodate babies snugly from the time they are born until the time they can talk (good for babies up to 30 lbs). Studies have shown that babies who are carried in pouches or slings tend to cry less, learn faster, and get "humanized" earlier. Let me explain that. It has been found that the proximity between parent and child increases interaction, and the baby is constantly learning how it works in the human. Carried babies are intimately involved in their parents' world because they participate in what their mother and father are doing. The baby is more exposed to and consciously involved in what is going on around him.

Another product that is very practical and stylish is the Reversible Nursing Bib that has an adjustable strap for easy wearing. It is made of lightweight and washable material so it is super comfortable for both mother and child. Indigo's Reversible Nursing Bib is available in hip

INSIDE the daycare center

prints and is reversible to match your wardrobe.

Indigo Baby also makes a Full range of organic, all-natural baby products. I love their Air of Hope, which is excellent for insect bites, cuts, chapped lips, wounds, or any other skin-related ailment. The gel contains arnikene from blue chamomile essential oil, which has extraordinary antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. It also helps relieve pain caused by sore nipples from breastfeeding and is a balm for working palms, fatigue and tenderness.

The Above-It's Devil's Herbal Mosquito Repellent is a light non-greasy milk lotion. It is a synthetic, pyrethrin, oxybiprin and citronella-based insect repellent that keeps mosquitoes and other insects away from you and your baby.

E-mail the author at mcby_bibles@gmail.com

ions April 18

PR. Ferdie Diaz and Janice Abigail Tiukinoy

nite Instances and the Master Universal.

Another procession is the Procesión del Miércoles Santo (8 p.m., March 19) where the faithful can see pasos depicting the Lord's public life and Passion. The Procesión del Viernes Santo (6 p.m., March 21) concludes with the burial of the body of Jesus.

Seven Last Words

Those interested will host this year's television presentation of the Seven Last Words of Christ, a pilgrimage of faith to the Holy Land". Produced by ABC Productions, Inc., the special airs on March 21, Good Friday, 9 a.m.-12 noon, on RPN Channel 9.

Accompanying with Fortune General in ceremony Co., Eternal Gardens Memorial Park, Fortune Cast, Eternal Plaza, Greenhill Estate, Pagcor, Bayside Dr. Park C, Island Tiles, Cleveland, Alphaeus Electricals, INC. SOL, Silka C, Lahore Metal Corp, Bert Hogan Mercy's Shoppe, Gilbert Music, Igleshia Board & Trusts and Pastor, Inc. the give grain Senators the following guest homilists: Imus Bishop Claro Taglo, Fr. Marcis Seleojanino, SSP; Fr. Edgar Franklin H. Alfo Dip, Cubao Bishop Honorato Dagdoon, Fr. Aaron Pascual, and Msgr. Rubino Sinopo, Jr.

Professor is Dan D Cunha mid-Aking E. Cirolo at executive professor-director and Cabinetist SL China at inches.

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From page F1

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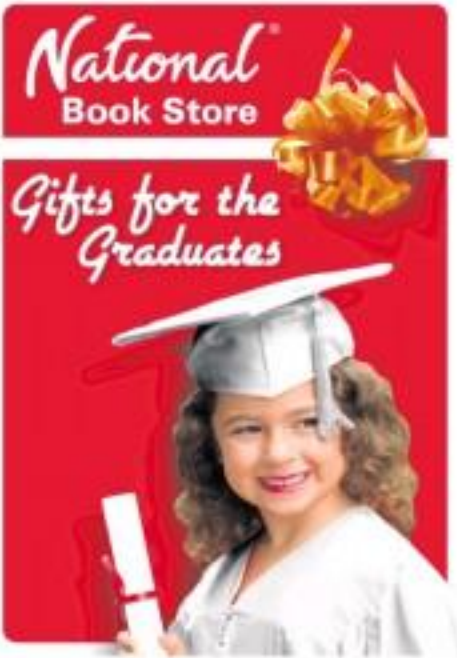
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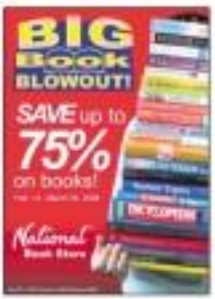
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Sunday LIFESTYLE

Kit has new passion

KIT Silverio-Zuleta

A rare glimpse into a life enriched by family, education, advocacy, reading and tennis

AFEW MONTHS OF ON-AND-OFF activities, it's good to be back doing a weekly column!

For the remainder of "TNT" we thought of tweaking it a bit to fit your reading habit. It will still offer the latest in fashion, gadgets, travel, mind-changing entertainment, society and more.

This month I kick off with an updated version of the column I started back in 1999 titled "Her World"—a Q&A of a woman, her thoughts on style, life, much like the "Proust Questionnaire" of Vanity Fair.

Pitch your phrases. I rename this column focusing on a woman who is very special and became so—cupid is she. We go very back, to Grade I, in her province, where we were both at International School.

She has always been a true lady, a feminine friend and beauty, inside and out. In the more than 30 years I have known her, she has remained down-to-earth, always generous and positive.

Besides being a fantastic wife and resilient fifteen daughters and one son), she is also passionate about getting the perfect husband (a diehard tennis player), and singing. She founds a music. This lady's many-sides-to-a perfection.

She is an advocate and volunteer fundraiser for Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education (www.center.org.ph), a program managed by Ayala Foundation which provides deserving students from marginalized communities quality education.

She also has a newfound passion, photography, and is one of the participants in "Photographers' Shared Moods" exhibit, part of Ayala Land Inc.'s Brave Filipino series of events.

The exhibit will feature amateur and professional photographers such as Frankie Callaghan, Pradeep Gyanpathra, Johann Espiritu, Gabby Lacuesta, Quincy Castillo, Paul Dancel, Sancho Icasiano and Omar Fajardo. It will run for two weeks starting March 27, at the Green Park 2 lobby, Ayala Center, Makati.

This is Kit Silverio-Zuleta back, and this is her world.

How did your interest in photography come about?

I had an SLR camera that was on automatic mode for a number of years. I started a point where I felt I wasn't using it to its full potential and took classes at the Silverbrew Gallery. It's been over a year and a half since then and I'm still hooked!

PART of the exhibit "Photographers' Shared Moods" is Ayala Land Inc.'s Brave Filipino series of events

How do you feel about your participation in the Brave Filipino series of events and exhibits?

I was, of course, thrilled, pressured, excited and very grateful to be one of the participants!

Who are the photographers whose works you admire?

Elliot Erwitt, Charles Harbutt, Robert Doisneau, Henri Cartier-Bresson, just to name a few. These artists took fabulous black-and-white images, knew when to press the shutter at the right time, masters of the "decisive moment" which Cartier-Bresson became well-known for.

Describe your personal style.

My personal style is casual and relaxed. I am almost always in jeans and comfortable clothes.

What's a characteristic you like/dislike in people?

I'll just focus on what I like in people... that includes having a great sense of humor, sincerity and integrity.

What book are you reading now?

"The Birth of Venus" by Sarah Dunant—a historical fiction set in the city of Florence during the reign of the Medicis, recommended/read by a good friend.

What's a book you would recommend?

"A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini, same author of "The Kite Runner," both must-reads! The former, about life now and experienced from the point of view of a woman, the latter, about unconditional friendship between two men, both set in troubled Afghanistan during the rise of the Taliban.

How do you relax?

Reading, listening to music, watching movies, having a good massage, playing a great game of tennis.

What's your favorite comfort food?

Gimgang, hands down! I even bring the ready-made mix on summer trips abroad.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE Do-it-yourself D.I.Y.

LIME AND VINYL
Barretto uses a basket covers it with aqua teal, groups the flowers in mono hued vases, the colors stand out. He pairs lime-colored tablecloth, mod placemats or tangerine tablecloth. Lucinda's glass plates, linen napkins and green-colored glasses—all from SM.

EASTER YELLOW, LILAC, BLUE
Barretto fills the container with eggs, moss, cream-and-rich fresh spider mums and hydrangeas. They go with blue tulle placemats, napkins, blue-and-white pattern plates—all from SM.

PLUCK LEAVES FROM YOUR GARDEN
"Don't waste stems. You can cut and bend them to add detail and height," says Barretto. "You can use leaves from your garden.

This is simple living but with distinct style

ANTON Barretto and Marissa Lopa

Photos by Robert Pilot
Contributor

TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S leading creative consultants, Marissa Lopa and Anton Barretto, show you how to turn the ordinary in your home and garden into something extraordinary. It's a mastery of developing an eye for it and a unique touch.

"You can give future duo down home chic.

"I wanted to show more contemporary floral arrangements that can easily be made using easy materials in the home—leaves, baskets," said Anton.

Lopa "updates" the bathroom in contemporary design by using bright colors.

Look around your surroundings and do it yourself.

UPDATE WITH COLOR
Lopa updates the bathroom to a contemporary look, using shades of green in the accessories, including sage wreath-ruffled mesh to enhance the tranquil and clean lines.

USE COLOR AND THEME
Red and yellow rolled towels pick up from the fabrichoose. A vase of blades of grass adds height and fullness.

FUN AND BRIGHT
Be bright in your bathroom. Splash it with color. Pick a theme—like the fish—in these plastic accessories and bumper—all from SM.

THE AUTHOR, parents Jose and Belen Reyes Laurel, and maid of honor Vanessa Laurel-Parmanes

THE BRIDE with her bridesmaids

WITH Texas Priano Robles

Designing my sister's wedding

DANCING the night away!

By Rioja Laurel
Contributor

MY SISTER JUST GOT HITCHED to her best friend. They have been friends since they were 14 years old. He was always around the house and keeping Gela company. I actually really like the guy, and his family is the bomb.

I needed a couple of days to digest everything and to really take it all in. I mean, this is my baby sister we're talking about!

I have been designing wedding gowns for more than 15 years now. It is what I love to do and arguably what I do best. Everyday I look forward to meeting my brides, discussing every minute detail of their big day—like the font to use in the invitations, the flowers they will carry down the aisle, the correct hue of the lalo in the entourage, even the color of the tablecloth at the reception.

I have developed a keen understanding of all these elements and how important they all are. When it comes to weddings, I see what you might call an interactive designer. I encourage and enjoy including the bride and groom in the design process. After all, it's their wedding.

When it's my sister's, I turn dictatorial–and how

Full charge

There were little all changes if you're my client. When you're my sister, I take full charge and everything begins to feel dictatorial—although I did ask her what she wanted and I did listen (a bit).

She wanted something Japanese-inspired, evocative of origami, the art of paper folding. I said, perfect! Your theme will be "Elegant Intimate!"

I asked trusted friends nurse Bartolome and Judith Zapanta to create the space and the beautiful floral bouquets, and they did a fantastic job. Gilbert Pangilinan of Kat couldn't himself by creating the most mouth-watering buffet spread filled with fun specialties, such as the Tempura season, his deadly pork belly dish (slowly cooked for like 12 hours!), and the most amazing sushi and sashimi spread that had the guests gushing both for its taste as well as its visual delight.

We commissioned Peter by Zubas of Silver Cream to do a revolving cake, since I wanted something really different that would be the focal point of the entire room! I am so happy that she was able to do it. The silver cake looked stunning, with Japanese-inspired graphics all over it.

For the dresses, I wanted playful and interesting pieces. I decided to do a black-to-orange. Black, after all, is the wedding color in Japan. I used bold and brilliant colors like red, hot pink, lime and orange as the "original" features and highlighted that palette with my unique obi collection, which I'd been hoarding since I was 13 years old.

Strong colors

The minimum of my team and it felt as if we were on the set of Project Runway, as I was the one cutting and draping every single one of the gowns.

For the mothers and the entourage, I opted to use strong colors to make the wedding really festive.

Gela's wedding gown, on the other hand, was made of seven different materials: white Mikado silk, platinum grey Italian satin, navy Abraham silk gazaar, silk satin organza in taupe, a striped pima silk weave, and two kinds of vintage chiffon I used for her train.

Her gown had a very simple square neckline and a draped skirt. But the piece de resistance was her train, which was an extravagant one.

Ace and Gela wanted a really fun wedding filled with family and friends. I believe they got the wedding of their dreams!

HEAD-TO-HEAD with Ace Sobrevinas

BRIDE'S niece Stephie Antipa-Laurel, Daniella and Ale Laurel-Parmanes

INCREDIBLE revolving cake by Peachy Jabson of Elven Cruz

ARTADI-PEREZ NUPTIALS

NEWLYWEDS Paul and Maggie Artadi with their parents, Noreen and Cynthia Perez, and Carmen and engineer Jose Artadi

WITH the principal sponsors. Back row: Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, Robert Mon, Lucio Tan, Jr., Joel Ma. Mallare, Jaime Bautista, Enrique Cojuangco, Lenyee Chua-Sevilla, Antonio Cruz, Jr., Jose Artadi, Jr., Alvin Paternostro, Gilda Cruz, Rep. Lauro Carolyne, Milagros Potenciano, Rosario Puyat, Gloria Sy, Maggie Perez-Artadi, Paul Artadi, Ms. Thelma Villar, Sandra Morales, Maria Pia Dy, Amina Rasul-Bernardo, Ms. Rosan Perez

Kit has new passion

From page G3

It's rewarding to have a taste of home while away on family holiday.

What was your childhood ambition?

To be a doctor.

What are your fond memories growing up?

Family traditions that we celebrated such as hanging ornaments on the Christmas tree, Easter egg hunts, trick-or-treating, Bicutan, dressing up as kings and queens for the Santacruzan, going down the street to the homes of close friends and playing for hours and hours. These are some of the wonderful memories from my childhood.

What turn your first childhood crush?

Francis Arnaiz, during the days when my father coached the Toyota Tamaraws in the PBA. I must have been 10 years old.

What's your favorite spot on earth?

At home with my family or wherever we spend a holiday together.

What are your passions and why?

Photography – I relish the thrill of capturing a candid moment, a surprise. I love images that tell a story. Those shots are challenging, the kind that are spontaneous, that are not staged, that are natural and where the subject is unaware of the photographer being there. I'm also interested in other aspects of photography such as wildlife, abstractions, and landscapes. There's so much to learn so there isn't any one aspect learned.

Tennis – I get a great workout from it and thoroughly enjoy the competitive nature of the sport.

Plants – The garden at home is my sanctuary. My husband and I made sure that every room in the house has a view to the outside that was created for us by landscape artist and friend, Pierre. I read a lot about plants and regularly attend the garden shows to look out for new varieties.

Music – There's not a day that goes by without me enjoying one of my favorite tunes which **ran range from the '50s to current releases! The** music store are one of the first places I visit whenever I go to travel and I can spend hours there rubbish down my husband once it.

How do you divide your time between being a wife, mother, and having your personal time?

I try to strike a healthy balance between these three.

How has being a mother changed your life?

Being a mother has definitely given me much happiness and fulfillment as well as challenges.

Watching my children grow up, the excitement of seeing them discover and learn new things, the apprehension I feel when they have an illness or an accident, as well as the frustration on days they just won't listen and obey and of course the endless hugs and kisses I can never give them enough of—it's all part of being a mom, which I enjoy. It's definitely changed my life for the better and it's an evolving process.

How many years have you been married? (She is married to Fernando Nebel, vice-chair of Ayala Corp.)

Going on 14 this year!

How did your husband propose to you?

In a beautiful palace in the middle of a lake in Udaipur, India.

What's your secret to a long-lasting marriage?

Keep the lines of communication open, allow each other personal space and growth, constantly find ways to show you care...

What are your dreams and wishes for your husband/children?

For my husband—that he constantly finds fulfillment in everything that he does in life, that he achieves most if not all of his dreams and wishes, and that he always be happy and healthy. (he has become a fitness addict so this shouldn't be a problem!)

For my children—that they grow up to be happy, well balanced and kind individuals, who can reach make a meaningful contribution to our country.

What have you learned as truth?

Live a day at a time, make the most of every opportunity and never take anything for granted.

What's something about you that people don't know about?

I'm terrified of speaking before a large audience.

SHARON Samaniego and Bambu Kit host Chinggay Ulanovsky and Cookie Newman

MARY Rose Marapagal (right) with Marriott Cebu GM Ray Abraham and wife Carol

RAYMOND Bragg (right) with Consul of Canada and Ms Robert Lee

Lively farewell party by the sea

SHEILA Sepulveda and Marielou Canizares

SHANGRI-LAS MACtan Island Resort and Spa hosted one of the liveliest parties of the season at the Ocean Pavilion.

The night was starry, the sea calm, and breezes blew wafting off the shrubs.

There was a tinge of sadness, though, as it was a farewell party for Mr. OM Timothy Wright and his lovely wife Miven who have since left on a new route of duty to the Shangri-La in Bangkok.

In a brief speech, Tim recounted his 3½ Cebu years as one of the best and most memorable of his career. He and Miven have made many friends who will remain so forever.

There was much applause for new GM Raymond Bragg, who hails from New Zealand. He succinctly says to more his family to Cebu. He said in the past year, they stayed at the Marian Shangri-La several times because they like it so much. His assignment here is a dream made reality.

Seeing to everyone's comfort and ease were the resort's communications director Sharon Samaniego and his assistant Lesley Anne Tan.

If tasty hors d'oeuvres, a cocktail party but what was on the buffet and serving stations amounted to a feast. Congratulations were heaped on the food/beverage director Trevor Stevens.

Service was excellent as usual, everyone told Sheila Sepulveda, the human resources director who was discussing over work with Marielou Rodrigues Canizares. There was no time limit to the party so quite a number stayed on.

No drains? Never mind, there were more granite steps leading to the garden as well as a decorative ledge beside them. There settled Augusto Lhuillier, Chinggay Ulanovsky and Cookie Newman for a long chat.

When it was finally time to go, Ching and Cookie told their handsome escort if he'd pass on another \$20 CD to him along with all the way to Cebu City. And take the long route, they parted, with Ching adding "C on a line!"

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Piccarri

Language lessons

Michel Lhuillier was most amused and asked the ladies, "Would you like to learn French?" He is giving full support to Les Amis de la France (Friends of France in Cebu). They have set up a French Cultural Institute and Language Center.

It is located at the QC Pavilion along Gorordo Avenue and was recently inaugurated by the Ambassador of France and Madame Gerard Chemali.

French lessons are imparted by the director **Lenda Theresia** and the assistant Mme. Genny. **Lowell Abad** takes care of the reception desk.

Summer is a good time for children and oldsters to enrol in language courses. Experts say children below 14 who study a language learn it faster and speak it with more fluidity than others.

While French lessons are offered by Les Amis de la France this summer, lessons in Spanish will also be offered at the Centro Español de Cebu by Los Amigos de España, which is headed by **Augusto Lhuillier Tuason** is Maximo Mihalbar who simdoes tete-on-one tutoring.

During the latest meeting of "Amigos," the guest speaker was **Mary Rose Marapagal**, cluster sales manager for Visayas and Mindanao of Qatar Airways. She spoke not just about the best way for Cebuanos to get to Manila, but about the more than 80 Qatar Airways destinations worldwide.

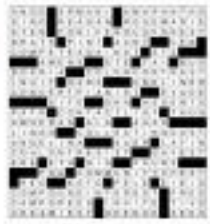
The next meeting of "Amigos" will be over lunch at Casino Espanol on March 27, with an invitation extended to those who enjoy speak in Spanish. There will be tables for six, with six folded pieces of paper in a bowl. Each person will pick out one and speak with his or her teammates on the topic stated.

It was fun fortunching the topic themes, or questions for Amparito and the rest of the officers: **Mr Susan Sala**, secretaries **Bhyss Gonzalez** and **Angelica Madrid**, and treasurer **Arlina Mauricio**.

The responses eavesdropping from the nearby tables? "Nada ako ex-cuentanda," said Cecilia Rodriguez, "Porque no hay nada nos que recuerda."

Nobody else but

ANSWERS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie C. Velarde

INSIDE

- The Brian blogspot plot thickens Rushes /H6
- Drop the Diddy, dude Only In Hollywood /H8

Red Ribbon Must-try Cinnamon Rolls

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CUCKOO!

HMM Adlawan, Lorna Tolentino and Gina Pareño, left, star in the GMA 7 special, "Emmanuela," on March 22, starting at 7 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Beta Gamma Phi Fraternity and Sorority will celebrate its Golden (50th) Anniversary to be held on September 2008. For more info. Please contact the following:

1.) Bro. Jun D (0917)6259773
2.) Sis. Jesse (0 9157568 / 09178945766
3.) Bro. Manuel (0 8816235
4.) Bro. Noel (0 8821134 / 09331241072
5.) Bro. Tal (0 8918364405

Hassle-free Holy Week—stay home

YOU CAN HAVE A hassle-free Semana Santa—in the cool comfort of your own home. Even treasonous nanaimism might consider junking the nangre tours in favor of an inspired week-long Lenten viewing fare:

'Riddles of the Bible'

National Geographic Channel takes viewers in Biblical times in "Riddles of the Bible 2," featuring special documentaries on "Kings of Israel," "Cain and Abel" and "Riddles of the Dead Sea Scrolls."

"Kings of Israel" weaves King David and King Solomon, the first rulers of the united and two of the most famous sovereigns in Biblical history.

The documentary premieres tomorrow 6 p.m., with replays March 22 at 12 p.m. and March 24 at 9 a.m.

"Pilgrimage, Inside: Bethlehem Under Siege" shows modern-day Bethlehem through the lens of Christians caught between a growing Islamic fundamentalist direction and the entrenched Israeli bureaucratic mandate.

It airs March 22 at 9 p.m., with replays on March 23 at 8 p.m., March 24 at 7 p.m., March 26 at 5 p.m. and March 28 at 11 a.m.

'Journey of Faith'

BBC 2 and Jesus Communications' "Ang Paglalakbay: A Journey of Faith" focuses on eight retreat participants who evolve in their spiritual understanding, acceptance and faith with the help of retreat master Fr. Albert Alejo. Airing dates are March 30, 5 p.m., March 31, 12 p.m. and March 22, 6 p.m.

Also airing: "Ushog ng Bulong," a one-hour documentary on Sept. 11 film, March 23, 7 p.m.; "Pisanis," a reflection film featuring Gardo Versoza, Cherie Gil, Jeffrey Quizon and Ricky Davao, March 23, 6 p.m.; and "Paglalakbay," an inspirational musical featuring Gary Valenciano, Jaya, Ogie Alcasid, Regine Velasquez, Sharon Cuneta, Kuh Ledesma, Martin Nievera, Lani Misalucha, Rachel Alejandro, Ryan Cayabyab, Jed Madela, Erik Santos, Jamie Rivera, Christian Bautista, Nyoy Volante, Jonathan Manalo, Pilita Corrales, Rico Puno, Ariel Rivera, Basil Valdez, Ronnie Liang, Rey Valera, Dingdong Avanzado, Jolina Magdangal, Jessa Zaragoza, Jaclyn Jose, Ara Mina, Ai-Ai delas Alas, Dolphy, Vilma Santos, Aga Muhlach, Sharon Cuneta, Kris Aquino, Piolo Pascual, Angel Locsin, Judy Ann Santos, Claudine Barretto, Dingdong Dantes, Marian Rivera, Richard Gutierrez, Dennis Trillo, Iza Calzado, Carmina Villaroel, Diether Ocampo, Jennylyn Mercado, Mark Bautista, Rhian Ramos, Sam Milby, Maja Salvador, Bea Alonzo, John Lloyd Cruz, Heart Evangelista, Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson, Xian Lim, Kathryn Bernardo, Daniel Padilla, Enchong Dee, Jericho Rosales, Coco Martin, Angel Aquino, Ruffa Gutierrez, Cristine Reyes, Ryan Agoncillo

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3 MY BIG LOVE	3 MY BIG LOVE
4 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES	4 P2

DASMARIÑAS	IMUS
1 IN THE NAME of the KING	1 10,000 BC
2 UNTRACEABLE	2 MY BROTHER'S WIFE
3 10,000 BC	3 MEET the SPARTANS
4 MY BIG LOVE	4 MY BIG LOVE

ANGELES	TARLAC
1 10,000 B.C.	1 10,000 B.C.
2 THE ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES	2 27 DRESSES
3 THE MIST	3 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES
4 MY BIG LOVE	

STARMILLS	
1 THE MIST	4 JUNO
2 MY BIG LOVE	5 10,000 BC
3 I-10 TO YUMA	6 THE ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES

BACOLOD	ILOILO
1 10,000 B.C.	1 10,000 B.C.
2 IN THE NAME of the KING	2 THE BUCKET LIST
3 THE MIST	3 MY BIG LOVE
4 JUNO	4 UNTRACEABLE
5 MY BIG LOVE	5 GAWI in REAL LIFE
6 indistinc SELDA	6 P2

VHONG Navarro, center, with "Sigak Pagdiriwan" costars Valerie Concepcion, left, Making Movies and Pokwang

Vhong says he's happy, 'content'

By Herland R. Cruz

BEATTE A PO-lowered amusement of Mr. moon tape to former actress Bea-rio Lopez, comedian Vhong Navarro says he is happy and "content" now.

"Nobody says. My mom and dad no more, my kids are healthy, my ex-now is doing well," the comedian said. "There'll always be problems. I accept them as things that make me grow."

Because the separment to "settle a smooth five years," Vhong would not talk openly about his current re-mance with actress Eruleen del Valle.

The annulment now runs their four years ago. Vhong I'm in 9-year-old son with Bianca named Isaiah, the mother of his eldest, Frederick, 11, is not a close his personality.

"Eruleen knows everything that's going on in my life. She's always behind me. She cares for my family and my kids. She's ready to accept whatever happens with the annulment now," Vhong said.

During lunch with entertainment writers on Wednesday, Vhong "on the mend straight," and denied courting "Sigak Pagdiriwan" costar Valerie Concepcion.

"She's still going through a lot, a messy relationship in the further from her mind," he said of Valerie, who transferred from the Kapuso to the Kapamilya network late last year.

Vhong added that he got to "talk without stuff" with Valerie while working on "Sigak." She told me she was focusing on work, and that her daughter (Rhiana, 3) is her priority."

How far would you go for love?

Just hate laugh! doing rape magulang ni. Ay, magkikisad wmuhr mga ng dinom hahwon ha and my family. Nasmad ang pasa ko from my job gil al forced when we quarreled. It went on that way for a year and a half. It was a tough. I guess that's why the relationship ended.

Wanna engagement ring Vhong Navarro?

Medyo ano ako. I don't think I could tolerate a girlfriend who would leave me for my best friend. Ten ang nagpatotoh si ehh. And that has happened.

Did that make you giddy?

It's a girl really loves me, she should love my kid, too, package deal kaming sain. She can love us or she can go. Hindi ako magsisi. Hindi ako magsisi. Hindi ako magsisi.

How you ever been dumped?

It happened a lot in high school. That series of panahunan fumod me to ask anywell. What's wrong with me? Why don't girls like me?"

How do you react when people say you're now the top young comedian in ABS-CBN?

I tell them I'm just thankful that ABS-CBN is taking good care of my career.

Direct you feel the film's title for you?

We had trouble thinking of a good title. We even had a contest—we gave P5,000 to the person who finally thought it up. My character is described as a "happy guy" who will do anything for his beloved. I don't know about me being "dakilang..."

"Sigak Pagdiriwan," produced by Star Cinema and directed by Chilton Perez, will be shown nationwide starting March 22.

(Email: entertainment@inquirer.ph)

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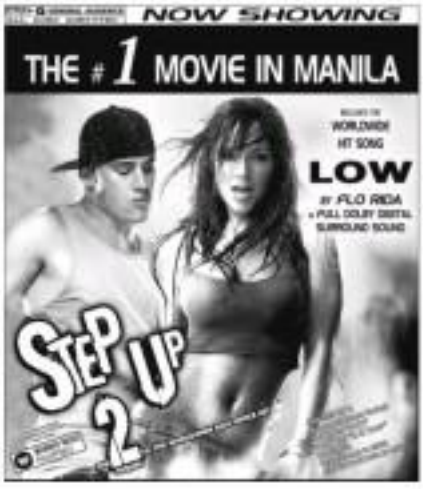

LUKE Mayard

'Idol' rejects show nicks from judge's sharp tongue

By Fran Katigbak

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'He makes you want to do the best that you can do'

KADY Hulay

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DARRIF Noriega

'You can be yourself and still succeed,' says colorful castoff Noriega

had horrified bigger obstacles than harsh critique. For one, her father died days before her AI audition. Her elimination from the talent search, she said, was just of God's "biggest, but not plan [for me]."

"I thought my head that my dad's just getting me through all of this," said Epperson. "I believe I'm going to have a very successful singing career, as well as in acting or anything in entertainment. I have a pretty good headcovering shoulders."

She credited the "Idol" experience for helping develop her as an artist. "It really makes you compete with yourself. That's what you should do anyway...do better each time you step out on stage. It definitely prepares you for the music business, because it's not always pretty."

Language

Despite the judges' outing that she lacked personality, Rudy Mobley had enough spunk to get signed up for an AI bus before she joined the show.

However, she was recorded, the recording experience did not give me AI entertainment leverage.

"I don't think that's very important for success this industry is an unpredictable that anybody can fail or an album," Mobley explained. "Anybody can pretty much get a record deal."

The Houston based singer, who has the uncanny ability to imitate Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Shakira, Gwen Stefani, and Usher, took a lot of flak for failing to show her own personality on stage.

"The judges] would always say and make me feel like I didn't have my own voice, whom I can't help but have my own voice," the 18-year-old said.

"I heard them say... because they're only three opinions. They're so many opinions that anybody on the street because, others it comes to music, everybody's opinion is equal to mine."

In addition to "Idol" contenders' blunt the judges are often praise-performing.

Aside from pursuing music, Mobley is also determined to [illegible] an animal shelter and a foster care... and be a gay-rights advocate.

She said she hopes it important to her because "hey, I have friend is gay, Freddie Mercury was gay. His body should be incinerated by them wounds."

YouTube videos

Danny Noriega, the sassy 27-year-old from California, couldn't agree more.

"Very personal life and your job are two different things; people should respect that and [unlovely judge] the fine line in between," he said.

But Noriega also covered it was hard to maintain privacy with fans—and detractors—pulling up old YouTube videos of himself and a few other contestants.

"Something on auditions or set acting videos... could be blown up out of proportion and projected in your [real] character," he said. "It's sad that people would do that, but really nothing's sacred. We're [entertainers] all trying to do something in life right now... how could anyone want to pull us down?"

Noriega was thankful for the past few feedback that had missed all the unwanted attention. He cited an 11-year-old boy who wrote to say he admired the singer for just being himself on the show.

"At few others' sites and it was cool that they'd never seen that before on the show. I'd really like to inspire those little kids who think they can't do anything because they're different whether it's sexuality or race," said Noriega. "It's fine to be yourself and be successful."

What he was most successful at was trading verbal jabs with Cowell and getting away with it. He called it "a sarcastic thing."

No compliments

Luke Menard said that Cowell, who called his vocals "too gutsy," never complimented him on cast.

"He really didn't give me much constructive criticism. [just] degrading stuff that I took with a grain of salt. I tossed him out as well," said the singer from Indiana.

With all that he had to endure from the judges, Menard learned to not take things personally, sound all types of criticism...whether [illegible] through friends or family members, or on cams. "You have to have a tough skin," he said.

The 24-year-old is one of the Nine Honorees, a name that he...Jason Yeager, Michael Johns and David Cook rolled three stages that started on May 1 in Hollywood.

Johns and Cook sailed through to the Top 12, but it was a bumpy road from the start for Menard, the Orlando Bloom look-alike who had left his cappella group of six years for the chance.

"It's a huge risk [leaving his group], but you can't further your career unless you're willing to take such risks," he explained. "It brought me to "Idol"! Yup. It; I'm hoping this will spur a big career."

Puffy, Diddy or Daddy? Just call him Sean Combs

"I HAVE DONE IT ALL," says the rapper-actor

LOS ANGELES—"I was able to have some nicknames and have some fun," he said. Yes, did he have some fun and hope accompanied and streamed with his ever-changing monikers: Diddy P Def. Jy Puff. Puff Daddy. Puffy.

Those different names matched his various roles: record and TV producer, fashion mogul, rapper, actor and presence—the list goes on.

But now, drum roll, please, he announced, "As an actor, I'm Sean Combs. Music is different—it's known that I've written with the Sean Combs."

Combs makes a TV film rendition of "A Raisin in the Sun," the first play written by an African American woman, Lorraine Hansberry, to be produced on Broadway [in 1959]. Sean made his stage debut in the Broadway revival of the drama about a struggling black family coping with racism after winning a POW-Chicago in the screen adaptation. Sean again plays the role of Walter Lee, in which was originated by Sidney Poitier.

The Grammy-winning mogul does quite well opposite actresses in Phylicia Rashad, Audra McDonald and Sanaa Lathan.

At 38, Sean, who had a serious relationship with Jennifer Lopez, is now married. Before an excerpt of my press interview with the Sean who grew up to lead a conventional, responsible life but ranked up many accomplishments as he juggled various careers:

You grew up with your grandmother. How did that shape you?

My life has more in common with this role than people realize. My father was killed when I was 3 years old. I grew up in a family with three women—my mother, grandmother and sister. It's a very unique dynamic to grow up with three women. It shapes and molds you. It steers them into sensitive into being a man because they value sure and baby you. But they taught me morals, work ethic and the importance of taking care of each family. I was brought up to believe I could do anything.

What forced you to grow up and be a man?

At my most successful time in music, before I was 23, I lost my job as A&R executive at Uptown Records). I got fired. I was being very aggressive, insensitive and arrogant. I just had a baby. I forced me to really step back and see how I disappointed my family, myself and the team I was working for. It changed my life. I had to grow up quick.

How about when you were younger—did you also have a defining moment?

When I was 11, I asked my mother if she could buy me a pair of sneakers. I knew it sounds stupid, but my mom didn't have the money. She took time on her face really fast (because she was embarrassed) she didn't have the money. From that day, I was like, I don't want to see that look on her face ever again. My first big school check, I went to get my mom a house. It was my dream to be able to buy my mother something or to help out with the bills.

Having grown up without a father, how important is it for you to be a father to your own children?

I have six children. I wish my father was there when I was growing up, but my mother filled those shoes very well. She taught me to treat other people well. That's how I brought up my kids. My grandmother manners is where people meet my kids and they say, "They're so well-mannered. They're so nice."

Since you have multiple accomplishments, do you see yourself as a rapper, actor, record and fashion mogul or entrepreneur?

I see myself as an entertainer. Now my focus is, I want to be considered and respected as an actor.

I have credited a lot. Musically, my persona was big, boisterous and in your face. But I've grown to the point where I could show my true side. I'm quiet, soft-spoken and even shy.

Do you still experience racism/discrimination?

I experience it all the time and it still hurts to this day. I could be in a hotel and walk into a room where the people stay out be of the same color as me. They may not say it but the look they give me hurts.

Do you actually design your clothing line, Sean John?

I am like a consultant, an orchestrator. I come up with the dream, or relate like a piece of music and I conduct the young designers through the process to get to the final outcome.

Your character in the film says that money is life while your mother says that freedom is life. How does that argument resonate with you in your personal life?

After losing my father and three of my best friends in gun violence, I realized I had money but I didn't have anything. I had those people around me and they just disappeared. I was very depressed and upset. I was crying all the time. I got caught up in money. That broke me up and taught me a lesson.

E-mail the columnist at rmpadua_5086@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Opinion Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.com/rmpadua/opinion.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rodney V. Nepomuceno

Brian blogspot: the plot thickens

By the Inquirer Entertainment staff

IT'S OFFICIALLY THE TALE OF THE town.

From the air-conditioned executive offices of a TV network to the firehouse set of an indie movie, the obsession du jour is Australian Brian Goodell's controversial blogspot, a running tome against his ill-spoken ex-lovers and the Pinoy's "soul-searching," "drug-addled" and "world-shrinking" lifestyle, one of which is a telenovela-in-the-love.

It was the scalding subject even during the finale taping of "Matinee" on Monday—an hour, it threatened to upstage the grand wedding of bella Ashanti and Serge Ibaka, head chanteuse of the GMA 7 soap opera.

Show biz denizens had been hooked just on reads as the original devoted Netizens, and the lover poked after the online telenovela was abruptly shut down on Wednesday night.

Reportedly, the rumor mill went berserk.

Then came Tonight Gorrell re-opened the site, at first only to deep gossip that he had been paid US$70,000, the amount he said his estranged boyfriend owed him.

"It's very simple. I have not been paid to single piece. The reasons are later. And until later," he wrote on Thursday.

The next day, a new missive greeted hopeful Netizens: "Three thousand e-mails. That's how many I have received. 3,413. People all over the world are demanding that I re-open this blog. So I will," Gorrell said.

Movie over, Greta

Gorrell's engrossing ranting-style was described by Australian "celebrity in" by "Matter in 3" screenwriter and entertainment columnist Dhiren Bravo.

"It reminded me of Dominick Dunne's books... The Two Mrs. Grenvilles,' 'People Like Us' and 'A Season in Purgatory,'" Bravo told Bulatlat.

It made Gretchen Barretto's latest scandal (you know, he-rated).

Who knew it would take a gay Aussie to upstage Jo Clerici?

Some bloggers had previously put to bed... our spin in the unforgiving blog's Comments section, which Gorrell decided to shut down permanently on Friday.

One blog fan in her suggested that "Unwrapping Rap Asylum" host and columnist Ogie Diaz should be cast as Gorrell's ex-boyfriend in the blog's movie version, if ever.

Diaz's quick-reply echoes raised no controversy: "Bongga!" "Bad's "fabulous," in gay lingo.

"That would be my 32nd film," Diaz said on Friday afternoon. "We were talking about the blog in the dressing room this morning. [ABS-CBN actress Heart] Evangelista was always the suggested casting version. But who would dare invite to that production?"

Not to take credit for the collaboration in creative show biz kudos: "Connect the dots," the sleuth smiled. "It could be just a gimmick to promote the club where those anonymous people hang out. Remember the noisy separation of a show biz couple recently? It was for a new song. And one comedian's cry for justice for her son? For scores [romance]."

Hmm. We did hear of an "item thing" going there the other night. One of Brian's Netizen supporters described the place in his blog as a "drag den," and one of the high-profile owners as a "drag climber." The plot thickens. It could take the last convention to get.

Colorblind couple

A Gay Celeb who's a major character in the above-mentioned online drama, is now the MTV of a Young Singer-Actress.

Understatement to: YBA, her former lover wants was a bedroom and drug cohort of GCW.

A source claims that H, is now hopelessly hooked on coke. Not the soda.

No Gabby for Jokers

GMA Film head Annette Gozon-Abrogar has announced that US-based actor Gabby Concepcion is no longer in the cast of the "crime movie" top-billed by Johnny Bingkasan.

Dennis Trillo has been cast instead as the male lead in the comedy flick, "I.S.A.L.A. (I Trust And Love You)," which also stars Bella Flor Quinto and Eugene Domingo. Mark Meer and Eliza Barrera.

Abrogar told Bulatlat: "GMA Films has another project to mind for Gabby's comeback. His contract with the company states that Gabby's movie comeback is with us. We trust that he will fulfill his commitment." An insider added that Gabby has received a down payment from the Express movie series.

Dream come true

DARYL FLORES—Gretchen Wilby Cyrstal's dream came true on Thursday when he played for the New York Yankees in a spring training baseball game, leading off a pitch-to-first inning for against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Crystal is a lifelong Yankees fan.

Reuters

McCartney rulings

LONDON—Former Beatle Paul McCartney is expected to find out on Monday how much of his fortune he must hand over to estranged wife Heather Mills when a judge rules on their acrimonious and highly public divorce.

Speaking of McCartney ... he turned vegetarian after going on a fishing trip. He reveals to a new celebrity campaign for an animal rights group launched on Wednesday.

The former Beatle, 66, poses next to the words "I Am Paul McCartney, And I Am A Vegetarian" in the adverts for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta).

"Many years ago, I was fishing, and as I was standing in the pool [lake], I realized, I am killing here, for the passing pleasure it brings me", he said. "I realized as I watched him fight for breath that his life was as important to him as mine was to me."

Sir Paul, pictured wearing a trilby and a T-shirt with the words "Eat this" over a picture of a cow, said he believed if the world exposed cruelty it could bring an end to it.

Mills, Linda, who died of cancer in 1998, launched a line of vegetarian food in Britain.

Reuters, AFP

Ex-stripper out

NEW YORK—David Hernandez, the "American Idol" contestant with a reported history as a male stripper, was eliminated on Wednesday from the competition on the hit TV show. More than 20 million viewers cast votes for their favorites this week as the series entered the home stretch of its seventh season, moving from three nights a week to two.

Reuters

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Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

Buffa-Lariopic

• "I look also pagood kay Sissy Acuña!" – Buffy Guinevere (Something rubbing here.)

• Buffy, binding-kasal na daw(sic) si Jamil Maravilla!!! (Matchmaking ako kay Inay Lita.)

• Buffy re, Lolit Solis, tipLumalaro sa linya bago sa gown?! (Lolit Arambilla wonders.)

• Imahinasyon Lord-Buffy, nag porn ji' (Oh, pull-down...)

• Lyric, nagpalipas kng magpaka-inay kay Buffy! (Yun nanaking.)

• Nagbalot na Binibining Pilipinas winner, 'nakaraan' kay Buffy (Only, Jessica!)

Right-minus wrong

• Yabuki Concepcion, ayaw magingg Aalis? (Mawawang mga puede, ha?)

• Alwaysmore de Mesa, nagbabalak na sa isang komikyum (Aba, wag sa ring.)

• Cristine Reyes, ill type ang mga bagets!

• Dyan Ablaid, inakalaimaton ang asawa'ng mga nakaraan (Ang nakaraan? Oh, kaya rin Okay lang yan.)

• Jennylyn Mercado, meron ang pagbabalik-ari! Blessing bonds ang pagsasama? (Amenpot!)

• Angel Locsin, ex of Luis Manzano, ibang lawak nang nagkakarelasyon Y (Jiwi! Gin?)

• Claudine Barretto, independent Angel!

Word of the week

• Iwa Moto, if raw magpapa-drama kay Robin Padilla, promise! (Chorus!)

News re, rans ra

• Gretchen Barretto, kdapuan ang bbay ang nagbigay sa!

• Erich Gonzales na ang mga-model!

Those who care...

• Angelika dela Cruz, may engagement ring na?! (Show of hands, please, those who care.)

• Sheena Halili, hindi na-naked si Gabriel Canillo! (Show of hands...)

• Kim Chiu, starting cheerguy nghuhu-hong ala-Sweet's of Bernard Bardoneta! (Ay, ad'ans?)

(Thanks to Rambina, Tambal!)

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(Need to share the news? E-mail us: reader@inquirer.com.ph.)

PENTHOUSE REVISITED

Remember the "Penthouse I" dance program on TV will have a reunion show at the NBC Tent on April 10. Jovitar Lazaro is gathering the troupe: Marlyn Feliciano, Rose Ann Altomonte-Sao, Anna Garcia, Tita Garcia, Ronnie Henares, Ma Henares, Bina Valenciano, Sandy Montemayor, Pipo Libiran, Niki Moreno, Susan Papasin, Percy Quirino, Mike Monserrat and Ray Ao Pamisan. The first three readers who can attach the names to the faces to phone with the prizes. For tickets, call TicketWorld and Manila Specials or email penthouse1grandreunion@yahoo.com. Beneficiaries: Ballet of Performing Arts Arellano University, Ballet Philippines Foundation, Light Terrace Inc.

NEW FRIEND, NEW SHOW

Paris Hilton poses for photographers at a news conference in Los Angeles, announcing that new MTV series, "Paris Hilton's My New BFF." REUTERS